

107130
D.

THE CARDINAL DICTATOR:

A PORTRAIT OF RICHELIEU

BY

AUGUSTE BAILLY

Translated from the French by
HAMISH MILES

1432



CHECKED

Checked
1987

NOT TO BE ISSUED

JONATHAN CAPE
THIRTY BEDFORD SQUARE
LONDON

FIRST PUBLISHED 1936

JONATHAN CAPE LTD., 30 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON
AND 91 WELLINGTON STREET WEST, TORONTO

973.545

BA1

Acc. No.	12152
Class.	F. 3.
Issue	30

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY J. AND J. GRAY, EDINBURGH
PAPER MADE BY JOHN DICKINSON AND CO. LTD.,
BOUND BY A. W. BAIN AND CO. LTD.,

CONTENTS

I. YOUTH	11
II. THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON	35
III. THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615	64
IV. INTRODUCTION TO POWER	79
V. THE FIRST MINISTRY	99
VI. VIGIL OF ARMS	115
VII. THE CHIEF MINISTER	131
VIII. LA ROCHELLE	153
IX. THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA	176
X. THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE	208
XI. RICHELIEU AND EUROPE	228
XII. RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER	248
XIII. THE LAST ASSAULT	268
XIV. POST MORTEM	283
APPENDIX	285
INDEX	307

ILLUSTRATIONS

CARDINAL RICHELIEU	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>From the painting by Philippe de Champaigne</i>	
MARIE DE MEDICI	<i>facing page 78</i>
<i>From a contemporary portrait</i>	
STUDIES FOR THE PORTRAIT OF RICHELIEU	„ „ 130
<i>By Philippe de Champaigne</i>	
KING LOUIS XIII	„ „ 190
<i>From a portrait by an unknown artist</i>	

THE CARDINAL DICTATOR:
A PORTRAIT OF RICHELIEU

CHAPTER I

YOUTH

THE historian, embarking on the study of the life of a great man, is tempted to seek in the scene of his birth, and in his ancestral stock, all the converging forces that moulded his personality. In so doing he obeys that natural tendency which inclines us to make the past explain the present, or heredity the individual. But even if this method is apparently revelatory, it is nevertheless deceptive. We shall never know to what extent the human being is influenced by his birthplace or his stock. If we seek only his most general characteristics, those shared by all his contemporaries, we must still wonder in vain just why this man, and this man alone, emerged as the man he was; and if we try to define our reasons, we stumble at once into the pitfalls of the arbitrary or the fanciful. For in the ultimate analysis we can never tell from what synthesis genius is born: and that alone would be of prime significance.

It would not, therefore, be useful, still less conclusive, to attempt here an ethnological study of Poitou, nor to trace to its farthest origins the family from which Richelieu sprang. A few details suffice to show his place in space and time. They are not intended to explain why he was himself: that, whether our concern is with a great man or a great work of art, must always elude us. But anecdotal details can at least satisfy a legitimate curiosity.

It matters little whether the family of Plessis springs

RICHELIEU

from an apothecary at Angles, or whether it goes back to Guillaume du Plessis, a groom of the chamber under King Philippe Auguste: all our ancestral trees, famous or obscure, are of equal length. In neither case did Richelieu come of a family of ancient nobility. The Plessis family, in its younger branch, attained prosperity only towards the close of the fifteenth century, thanks to marriages and inheritances which left them in possession of the lands and dwelling-house of Richelieu, south of the River Vienne, not far from Chinon. Thenceforth, by successive, well-planned family alliances, these small squires consolidated their position in the province, and saw their fortune grow to match it. They held no high office; indeed, their modest status did not allow them to seek it. But they seemed to have turned their attention, with a constancy which may not have derived solely from religious fervour, to ecclesiastical benefices. Some of them bore arms, and gained mild distinction in the Italian expeditions and the wars of religion. One of them, perhaps, merits closer attention, for his career was in a way both brilliant and unusual: Antoine du Plessis, known as 'the monk,' who abandoned his vows to serve in Italy, and later commanded a company of arquebusiers under the banner of the Guises. It was Antoine, this 'renegade monk named Richelieu,' who, in 1561, gleefully turned his arquebuses to massacre a hundred unarmed Huguenots shut up inside a church. For nearly fourteen years, with pitiless savagery, he warred against the Reformers. His exploits allowed him at last to be formally freed from his vows, and brought him the post of a gentleman of the royal bedchamber. L'Estoile has left us a spirited account of his death: 'On January 19, 1576, Captain Richelieu, a man of ill-repute, notorious for his thieving, rapine and blasphemy, and a great ruffian and

frequenter (

Rue des Lavandières, by wenching ruffians of his own sort.'

The eldest son of this adventurer, Louis du Plessis, marked a fresh stage in his family's advance by his marriage with Françoise de Rochechouart, who brought him neither beauty nor wealth, but the honour of kinship with a line of true nobility, who could treat the greatest noble dynasties as equals. This slow and steady social ascent enabled the family to reach the most honourable vantage-points, those which place a nobleman in the vicinity of the King himself and in the full daylight of the Court. The second son of Françoise de Rochechouart, who was widowed at an early age, proved to be the one who achieved this decisive step.

François (iv) du Plessis, starting his career as a page to Charles ix, had his first taste of war in consequence of a vendetta into which his mother pushed him with grim determination. One of his brothers, Louis du Plessis, had been slain by a neighbour, the *seigneur* of Mausson, scion of a family which had been avowed foes to the Richelieus, notwithstanding brief periods of truce, for many years. Françoise de Rochechouart was resolved that blood should pay for blood, and was satisfied only when her son François in his turn slew Mausson in an ambush. Obligated to leave France after this achievement, François du Plessis went to Poland. The Duc d'Anjou was there at the time, and was doubtless quick to realise that a young gentleman of such spirit might be a valuable servant. He attached him to his train. On the death of Charles ix, the Duc, now King Henri iii, brought back his comrade to France, and thenceforth counted on him as a devoted follower. At the age of thirty, François was Grand Prévôt, and at thirty-seven a chevalier of the Saint-Esprit. In all circumstances, in all the events of the reign, and until his dying day,

RICHELIEU

Henry III found him the surest, the bravest, the most loyal of his collaborators. His monarchical loyalty, and perhaps his acute political sense, led him to support the claims of Henry de Navarre, who, as Henry IV, confirmed him in his post as Grand Prévôt and enjoyed his support in all the struggles in which he had to engage. François died at the age of forty-two, in 1590, worn out by hard work, but esteemed by all and mourned by the King. He had married young, probably in 1567, his wife being Suzanne de la Porte, a young lady of sound provincial bourgeois family, not of noble blood, whose father, according to Saint-Simon, was a celebrated advocate in Paris. This François de la Porte was famed for his learning and disinterestedness, and was admired by his contemporaries and peers. Vanity was the only fault they found in him, and he certainly looked with favour on a marriage which linked his family with one of noble status and, nowadays, eminent in public life. But there was little affection between the proud Françoise de Rochechouart and her young daughter-in-law, who was shy and modestly dowered. When François du Plessis Richelieu died in 1590, he left five children—three sons and two daughters. His widow, in circumstances so straitened as to be verging on poverty, found herself doomed to live with her mother-in-law, in stern isolation. She devoted herself entirely to the education of her children, and to the uphill task of straightening out a very involved financial situation.

Of these children, the third was Armand Jean, born in Paris on September 9, 1585. When his father died, the boy was five years old.

To that boy his ancestors owe the survival of their memory. True to Church and King, fighting on the

YOUTH

battlefield, working to acquire ecclesiastical benefices, they are essentially indistinguishable from all the rest of the petty provincial nobility. A novelist might stretch a point and perhaps discern in each one or other of the traits which meet, more pronounced, in the character of Richelieu. But these *a posteriori* deductions are as suspect as they are easy. What stamps the mind of a child with a lasting imprint is his direct education; and that is chiefly the influence of the mother, when his upbringing has been really in her hands. More than all his forebears, it was Suzanne de la Porte, that serious, shrewd, energetic and melancholy woman, who moulded the heart and mind of her son.

He was delicate. Frequent feverish attacks caused his mother much distress. Armand Jean spent his early years in an atmosphere of anxiety and sorrow which inclined him to a meditative, if not a dreamy, habit of mind. A vigorous child, of keen and lively temperament, wrenches himself free from external constraints that weigh on him; zest for activity, a craving for gaiety, the appetite for life, can give him the strength to react against the bondage of his surroundings, and help him to free himself, or even to revolt. It is otherwise with those sensitive and impressionable natures in which the mind's strength is greater than the body's. Life at Richelieu was singularly devoid of cheerfulness. The manor stood in flat country, beside the Mable. Strongly fortified during the Hundred Years' War, it raised its stone walls and slate roofs in the middle of a vast park. The silence was unbroken, save perhaps by the bells of Braye, the church of which was visible not far from the demesne. It was a long way to a town of any importance. Tours and Poitiers, the cities which ruled the district, one in religious and the other in financial matters,

RICHELIEU

were spoken of as two capitals, which they only rarely had the means or the need to visit.

Actually the family lived a strictly secluded life within its castle walls, hardly tempted at all to emerge and see what was going forward outside. What tidings of the outer world reached the child sequestered in that moated old house set amid its surrounding trees? He would hear about financial troubles—debts to be paid off, scanty revenues to be collected, a painstaking work of regulating and reorganising. And he would hear about the sore anxieties caused by the religious troubles. This was a Catholic region, but it was ringed round by Protestantism, and during the second half of the century it was repeatedly disturbed by skirmishing, brigandage, and even real fighting. During the first ten years of his life Richelieu was familiar, if only through the cares and fears and talk of his family, with the anxiety roused by the proximity of armed bands, and with the distress of an ill-treated or pillaged peasantry. The only inhabitants of the château were women; the widow of the Grand Prévôt, her mother-in-law, and a sister-in-law, Françoise de Marconnay. They were deeply affected by their sense of isolation. Probably they cherished a hope that gratitude for service in the past would some day bring Henri iv to give them a thought, or at least to do something for the children; but they also knew that princes have short memories, and reserve their favours for those whom they see about them. Nevertheless, on more than one occasion, the King showed his generosity; it was the only gleam of light that reached, once or twice, their recluse lives.

Their only link with the outer world was through two men who showed them devotion and affection, and did all they could to help Suzanne de la Porte in her uphill

YOUTH

task. One was the Bishop of Luçon, Jacques du Plessis, who died in 1592, and the other, Amador de la Porte, who took a kindly interest in the education and prospects of his young nephew, little Armand. The circumstances of the child's life in this lonely manor, the twofold strain of private poverty and public discord, the atmosphere of worry and insecurity, readily enable us to discern, without textual evidence, how his first nine years were spent. His mother was constant in her care for him: she had almost died in giving him birth, and the infant himself had seemed doomed. She lived, and saved him; and this was a new bond, redoubling her maternal fondness. We see her continual anxiety for his health. What exactly were those 'fevers' from which he suffered? We do not know, and the medicine of the time evidently cannot throw any light on them. But any chronic illness attacking a child of outstanding intelligence—and his intelligence astonished all who came in touch with him—will always tend to concentrate his gifts, to develop a precocious seriousness, to quicken maturity of thought in a still boyish mind. The nature of his thoughts, Richelieu has not vouchsafed to us; but we may readily infer them, almost with certainty. The boy lived between his haughty grandmother, proud of her noble blood, and his mother, worried by endless practical cares, and under the eye of his uncle and great-uncle, who were likewise striving to rehabilitate the family fortunes. As soon as he could think, the child's ideas must have turned to the part which would be allotted to himself, to the place he would some day have to occupy—perhaps with the King, if his Majesty remembered his father. It was essential to struggle free from this pinching and scraping, to make a name for himself, to attract the attention of the sovereign and revive his memories of the past.

RICHELIEU

Ambition may not be a childish emotion; in the adolescent it scarcely ever shows except in the form of emulation, in the sense of competition with rivals of like age. But in a household of womenfolk, and living with a melancholy and worried mother, a boy will feel in its stead a desire to cherish and protect; from his earliest years he will long for her to be happy and care-free; he will assume the responsibility of being her saviour and supporter. These are the normal feelings aroused in such circumstances. They were inevitably those of Jean Armand. A precocious and unformulated ambition, seeking no exact and personal goal, was the natural tendency taken by his growing mind.

His earliest studies were directed, at Richelieu itself, by a prior from the Abbey of Saint-Florent at Saumur, Father Hardy Guillot. We know nothing of his learning, but he certainly knew enough of the elementary humanities which would be a grounding for higher studies to be able to instruct a child. Latin and French grammar, a little secular history, plenty of religious history, these were then the essential subjects which domestic tutors imparted to their pupils. But even more important than this rudimentary knowledge was the personality of the master and the sympathy he was able to win. Hardy Guillot was known, and even venerated, for his goodness and charity; we can be sure that when choosing him to be with her son, Madame du Plessis Richelieu had chiefly in mind the welfare of her child.

When he was nine years of age, his uncle, Amador de la Porte, considered that it was time to impose a more serious apprenticeship upon him. Although not altogether sound, his health was causing less anxiety. He was obliged to resign himself to the separation, painful as it might be, and this admirable mother, devoid of all selfish feeling,

YOUTH

agreed to deprive herself of the little boy who had hitherto lived beside her within reach of her loving-kindness. In Paris, however, he would not be entirely cut off from his family: his uncle accompanied him and undertook his care.

In 1594, the young Armand du Plessis, having left his province and the manor where he spent his earliest years, entered the Collège de Navarre in Paris; there his name was known, for his father and his uncles had attended its classes. It was an ancient establishment, one of the most illustrious of the age, and could pride itself on having counted among its pupils Henri III and Henri IV.

The instruction imparted there, which now awaited Armand Jean du Plessis, was very different from what is now given in the *lycées* of modern France. It was exclusively literary, with a preponderant place given to Latin: this was not only the written, but also the spoken, language, and in expounding texts more heed was given to form than to essential content: it was important to acquire a fine Latin style, to become skilled in turning a hexameter, to stuff one's brain with those sonorous phrases which were so useful in amplifying or the metrical clauses which could be fitted into a hemistich. The memory was constantly employed; it was the pre-eminent faculty; and to judge from the results of this method it does not seem to have been so lamentable as it is fashionable to believe to-day. From the very beginning, Richelieu attracted the attention of his companions and his masters by his intense application to work, and by a sort of combativeness which, even then, appeared as the essential trait of his character. In this respect, the information which Michel de Pure has handed down is extremely revealing. Richelieu, he tells us, was as eager for praise as he was apprehensive of censure; and when a child has such a disposition we may

RICHELIEU

be sure that no obstacle will stand in his way: he must necessarily prevail, since, on the one hand, there is all that appeals to him, and, on the other, all that alarms him. In an incredibly short time, almost at one stroke, he assimilated the entire grammar; this meant the initial studies, which as a rule were spread over two or three years. These preliminaries were followed by a more advanced course, in which oratory and the disputation held an important place. Here again the lad showed brilliance; he gave every evidence of qualities of maturity, insight and disciplined intelligence, and very often, in the argument, of a subtlety which disconcerted even his masters.

While these magnificent intellectual gifts were developing, this child, always spare, with his sharp features and keen eyes, was developing in his character a determination which nothing could shake, a vigour which nothing could impair. He was imbued with that energetic fervour of spirit that sometimes animates a frail body, giving it strength for sustained exertion which physical power alone could never accomplish. No doubt he cultivated those qualities of audacity, courage and combativeness all the more deliberately and resolutely as he then intended to adopt a military career. This was perhaps not his mother's wish, but it was the decision of the family council to which she had delegated the responsibility of arranging her son's future. When he was sixteen or seventeen, Armand Jean du Plessis had pursued his studies much further than most young gentlemen, if it be true, as it is said—and there is no ground for questioning the truth of this tradition—that he attended a course of philosophy after completing his instruction in grammar and the arts. This was a two years' course, consisting primarily of a serious study of Aristotle, as well as the elements of geometry—more than was neces-

YOUTH

sary, surely, for one who hoped to command a company of troopers, if such was to be his future.

Under the name of the Marquis de Chillon—a title which he held from a family domain—Armand Jean du Plessis was accordingly enrolled in what was then called the Academy, a training-school for officers. Its principal was Antoine de Pluvinel, a gentleman of Dauphiné, who was an equerry to the King. A remarkable horseman, an accomplished courtier, highly convinced of his talents and able to communicate them to his charges with persuasive mastery, Antoine de Pluvinel had with these young men a prestige that made his influence secure. Horsemanship was the essential element in his instruction, and the royal stables provided the mounts. He added fencing, and lessons in music and mathematics were given by teachers attached to the Academy. His position, in relation to these happy young men, was not only that of an instructor of physical culture; he intended to make gentlemen of them, and neglected neither their morals nor their worldly culture. Rich in experience, his memory well stocked with recollections and anecdotes, Antoine de Pluvinel enjoyed having his pupils around him, not only at the Academy, but at his table.

He regarded himself not only as practising a profession but also as fulfilling a mission. The code of aristocratic honour had no more ardent defender, and his lessons in courage and loyalty were easily imprinted on minds already fully prepared to receive them. The young Marquis de Chillon was one of the most ardent amongst these future officers serving their apprenticeship for a life of elegance and the arts of command. He could not doubt but that he had found his vocation. Like his father, he would serve his king in the field, and, with luck, sustained by his out-

RICHELIEU

standing intelligence, his resolution, the strength and seriousness of his character, he counted on rising higher than his own kith and kin, and on adding to their provincial fame the prestige of a wider and more fruitful glory. But events—which rule even great men's lives—obliged him abruptly to change his direction, and to engage in a vocation towards which, at this particular time, nothing seemed to be guiding him.

The Plessis family, through a gracious gift made by Henri III in 1584 to his Grand Prévôt, had the Bishopric of Luçon in its gift: a form of benefice which to us seems strange, not to say scandalous, but was held quite proper according to the customs of the time. The monarchy rewarded its loyal servants with abbacies or bishoprics in just the same way as the republic distributes tobacco-shops, the holders exploiting them through nominated intermediaries, who hand over the surplus of the profits. The Bishop of Luçon, then, was as it were the manager of the see on behalf of the Richelieus. The position would clearly be more profitable if a Richelieu in person exercised the episcopal functions, and this was in fact the desire of the family. After Jacques du Plessis, uncle of the Grand Prévôt, it was a *curé* of Braye, François Yver, who received the mitre and cross in 1592. This was merely an interregnum. It was only a question of waiting until Alphonse de Richelieu was old enough to fill the post. Unhappily, this young man, whose character seemed strange, suddenly refused it and decided to become a Carthusian monk, being doubtless too good a Christian and taking too serious a view of the responsibilities which it was sought to place on him. From this quandary only one way out could be seen if the episcopal revenues were to be kept intact, namely, to make a bishop of Alphonse's younger brother,

YOUTH

Armand Jean du Plessis, the pupil of Antoine de Pluvinel, and the officer-to-be using the swaggering title of Marquis de Chillon. It was rather an abrupt change of direction for the young equerry. But he did not hesitate. 'Let God's will be done,' he wrote. 'I will accept everything for the good of the Church and the glory of our name.'

This was the first turning-point at which he had to exercise that spirit of decision and that supple adaptation to circumstances which were to prove characteristic of his genius and activity. Did he regret being unable to pursue his intended career? It does not seem so. But he would never forget that he had been trained for the profession of arms, and the prelate always retained something of the cavalier. Besides, events would enable him to reconcile and exercise the virtues of the bishop and the captain: throughout his life we shall recognise the pupil of Antoine de Pluvinel.

The immediate accession to the bishopric at so tender an age—he was seventeen when he left the Academy to prepare for it—satisfied his self-respect in a way that a soldier's life could not have done for a long time. Even at this period, a bishopric was more important and more honourable than the command of a company, even of a regiment. In whatever position fate might place him, the youthful Richelieu was sufficiently aware of his own worth to be certain of attaining the first rank. If eventually he had moments of doubt about the future, he regarded it at this period with absolute confidence, in the intoxication of finding himself thus suddenly elevated to this exalted rank. It was, he knew, only a springboard for reaching a destiny still loftier. And what would that be? Only the march of events could tell. But he knew himself well enough to be certain that he would let no favourable chance go by,

RICHELIEU

and he saw himself from now onwards in a position to seize any opportunity that came within his reach.

A bishop-designate, but not yet enthroned, this young man fresh from the Academy abandoned equitation and swordsmanship to embark on theology. He had no intention of being a lay-figure, a mere title-holder who would leave the administration of his see to his canons. He wished to be capable of personally exercising the authority which would be placed in his keeping. At the Collège de Navarre, as at the military school, he had always been the foremost pupil. Desire to dominate was a second nature with him, but to dominate by his own merits and the ascendancy they gave him. In the Church as in the army, and much sooner in the former, he would have power to wield: he was determined to assume all its privilege, but he was anxious both to appear and to feel worthy of power, in his own as in others' eyes. He turned therefore, in 1602, to the intellectual work which he had deserted in favour of a more worldly—or, in our own currency, a more sporting—existence. More seriously and with deeper application, he took up again the philosophic studies which he had already started at the Collège de Navarre. Then, impatient at the slowness of a rather stagnant system of teaching, which his own intelligence soon outstripped, he decided to teach himself on methods of his own: he was impatient of any discipline which he had not planned or adapted to his own needs.

For two years on end, in retirement near Paris, he gave himself over to theological studies under the direction of a doctor from Louvain, Cospeau by name, at the same time engaging in controversy with the Englishman Richard Smith, one of the most famed exegetical scholars of the time. He carried on these exercises with all the enthusiasm

YOUTH

that he had given to his military apprenticeship. For eight hours a day he engaged in this exercise which calls for a well-stocked and swiftly responsive memory, a sustained effort of intelligence, and an ever-wakeful subtlety of wits. It was fencing again, no less rigorous and exhausting than the duelling practised under the direction of Antoine de Pluvinel. We see him here as we shall see him all through his life: never sparing himself, forcing his delicate constitution to efforts which would have overwhelmed the most vigorous men, ignoring or disdaining his physical weakness so as to let his spiritual faculties unfold in accordance with his desires and dreams of leadership.

Practical reasons may well have united to inspire him with this frantic haste to reach the end of his appointed studies. He regarded them as essential to achieve, but urgent to conclude. Relations between the Richelieu family and the canons of Luçon had, in fact, become definitely hostile. The good François Yver, obviously obeying the behests of his patrons, opposed all expense for maintenance; the chapter viewed with dismay the dilapidation of the cathedral, even of the episcopal palace; no claims were listened to: Madame de Richelieu refused to set aside any of the income. The canons resolved to take legal action, and by due process were granted a writ calling upon the bishop, acting for the Richelieu family, to carry out the essential repairs. That hapless bishop, constantly harried by his chapter on one side, by his patrons on the other! His post was a burden. In any case, his position was irregular, as he had not been consecrated, and in the end his name had been dropped from the documents issued in the bishop's name. It was becoming necessary to cry halt to a potential scandal. Henri iv, always generous when his purse was empty, appointed the

RICHELIEU

young *abbé* a bishop in 1606, when he was still five years short of the canonical age. The King undertook to petition for a dispensation. It may be surprising that he showed such loyalty to the memory of the Grand Prévôt, and such zeal in helping his family. But it should be mentioned that the elder brother of the new prelate, Henri du Plessis, was in Paris, conspicuous at Court and successful in attracting the sympathy of the sovereign. He was well known as a gentleman of high elegance; indeed, he was numbered among 'the seventeen,' that is to say, the seventeen most brilliant courtiers, who laid down the current codes of honour and fashion. At this period of his life, it was partly to his brother's influence that the young *abbé* owed the favours showered upon him.

The letter in which Henri iv instructed his ambassador in Rome, Monsieur d'Halin-court, to crave the necessary dispensation of the Holy Father, deserves quotation, at least in part. Its tone of eulogy is lightly pitched, as it was bound to be, but seems to surpass the requirements of the case, and one has the impression that the King's high esteem was quite genuine; although 'the said Plessis has not yet attained the age required by the sacred decrees and canonical constitutions to hold the said bishopric, I am convinced that his merit and capability can easily make amends for this deficiency. I write you this letter that you may lay the case on my behalf before His Holiness, with my cousin, the Cardinal de Joyeuse, to whom I am writing so that this favour may not be refused him, because he is in all respects capable of serving in the Church of God, and because I know that he gives no small hope of being of great utility therein.'

Those are not the accents of an ordinary recommendation. The letter has a note of personal persuasion, and the

YOUTH

sovereign almost pledges his word in bearing witness to the merit of his protégé.

During the summer of 1606, while the ambassador was preparing to arrange matters in Rome, the *abbé* de Richelieu, aided by fresh and more readily obtainable dispensations, passed in quick succession the various examinations which gave him theological status. As soon as he had acquired his rank he determined to leave for Rome himself. Doubtless he hoped to hasten matters, realising already that direct action is always the most prompt. But there was also a bold, and certainly very youthful, desire to be personally known to the Pope.

Short though his life had been, it was already rich in experience. And throughout it Armand du Plessis had been able to observe that his abilities, and doubtless his indefinable, but very potent, personal glamour, always set him instantly in the foremost place amongst other men, wherever they might be gathered together. At the Collège de Navarre, at the Academy, and more recently in the theological debates which he had victoriously carried on in public, he had been constantly and pre-eminently successful. Later, he would know himself better. He was to learn that the finest triumphs are always those which emerge from reverses, that the noblest destinies remain at the mercy of fortune, that genius itself finds obstacle across its path. But when a young man of twenty has found himself the object of such lavish admiration, and has never known failure, is he not certain to try to force the pace of fortune, and run ahead of his powers in order to make fortune more swiftly his servant? This young bishop designate, requesting the Pope to consecrate him before the proper time, doubtless had no idea of obtaining anything over and beyond his request: what greater favour

RICHELIEU

could he have hoped for? But, being about to take up a lofty position in the majestic hierarchy to which he would henceforth belong, he found it only natural to know from the start the highest dignitaries, to breathe the air of that Court which was more venerable than all other sovereign Courts—in fact, to approach the very summit, by addressing himself personally to the Pontiff from whom he expected his consecration, in that Roman church thronged with princes in purple robes, amongst whom his boyish imagination must already have watched his own future place.

Richelieu's stay at the Pontifical Court lasted about six months—long enough for his quick intelligence to grasp its byways, intrigues and secret manœuvres, and those unspoken greeds which work their plots of covetousness in the shadows. It was a wonderful school of diplomacy and dissimulation. Dissimulation was what the young *abbé* began at once to practise, with that sureness of touch which he gave to all his undertakings. Alert, deferential, zealous, he paid assiduous court to certain cardinals, who were won over and granted him their favour. Much of his time he gave over to studying Spanish and Italian, no great effort for a good Latin scholar. He lost no opportunity of public prominence, in theological debate or in public oratory, where he could be sure of dazzling. Even the stern Pope Paul v received him with unconcealed sympathy, after his initial curiosity. Here again that human magnetism which compels every one to accept the fascination of one man, showed itself no less powerful than before. Otherwise, there is no explanation of the freedom with which Pope Paul, distrustful by nature and habit, delivered his secret thoughts to this young man, and even indicated his apprehensions regarding King Henri iv. He observed,

YOUTH

and mentioned to Richelieu, that the King, having only just emerged from the errors of heresy, was giving himself over to the temptations of the flesh and surrendering to a life of pleasure. Was it not a risk, he added, that such conduct would lead him astray and drive him back to his former errors?

But the *abbé*, loyal to his sovereign, defended him, pleading his cause with such skill that the Pope at last approved the improvised defence with a smile and a light word.

The young ecclesiastic lost no chances of showing off his powers. He enjoyed dazzling, and even amazing, other men. Richelieu was not one of those who despise memory as a secondary quality. Contrary to the declaration of Rapin, there is ample evidence that he could be proud of his own, and that its swiftness and accuracy were exceptional. He won much admiration at the Court of Rome by aid of those feats to which he had trained himself. He amused himself one day by repeating, from start to finish and word for word, a long homily which he had just heard at a service. The feat caused a sensation. When news of it reached the Pope, he was curious, and asked the *abbé* to repeat the oration to him. Richelieu did so at once; and forthwith composed and delivered a new sermon on the same theme, so packed with quotations and vigorous in ideas, so moving and so profound, that his listeners felt they had witnessed a miracle.

He may have been slightly bemused by applause, and by the manifest friendliness of the Sovereign Pontiff, but he did not forget the reason for his coming to Rome. The Pope had shown too much sympathy to refuse Richelieu the dispensation he sought. It was granted, and the Holy Father added, as high eulogy, the comment: '*Aequum est ut qui supra aetatem sapis infra aetatem ordineris.*' Some

RICHELIEU

historians, however, allege that, to facilitate matters, the *abbé* had falsified the record of his birth, and that the Pope, though forgiving him, exclaimed: 'This young man will be a truly great knave!' Both anecdotes seem equally probable, and quite reconcilable: is not the Pope's accusation of knavery, accompanied by absolution, in itself a fresh testimony of esteem?

On April 17, 1607, during the festival of Easter, Richelieu was consecrated in Rome as Bishop by Cardinal de Givry.

He thereupon returned to Paris, a twenty-two-year-old prelate, easy in mind at last about his immediate future, and certain that the revenues of Luçon would not be diverted from his family. He completed his theological degrees, arguing his thesis before a dazzled audience. He chose as epigraph the scriptural words, '*Quis erit similis mihi?*' If he was reproached for the boastfulness of the reference, he could easily retort that he was thinking not of himself but of God and Holy Church. But in his secret heart, must not he have assured himself of that superiority which he had so amply proved, and cherished dreams of power and sovereignty, which, somehow or other in time to come, that superiority would give him?

Two days after this triumphant dissertation, he boldly requested to be enrolled amongst the doctors who formed the college of the Sorbonne. Fearing lest his youth should prevent him from being taken altogether seriously, he was at pains to conceal it by procuring honours generally reserved for maturity and for wisdom acquired by long experience. In October he obtained his desire, again by concessions from the rule. In the name of his exceptional genius, he claimed a constant right to exceptional treatment.

YOUTH

Between October 1607 and December 1608, the new Bishop of Luçon stayed in Paris. He studied the Royal Court, as he had studied the Papal Court, and both these periods of his life correspond in their intention: to place himself by one move at the peak of the hierarchies: to be presently known by both his sovereigns, spiritual and temporal: to win their esteem, their sympathy, even their friendship: to earn admiration by the breadth of his knowledge and the brilliance of his mind: to be initiated into the affairs of Church and State: to observe intrigues without participating in them and to discern the forces of ambition, greed, enmity and faction. These fourteen months put a severe physical strain on the young prelate. His feverish attacks, which had caused his mother so much concern throughout his childhood, had revived, in more frequent and violent form: for some years he had burdened his frail constitution with the fatigues of excessive work, and probably the climate of Rome—in those days so unhealthy, and from which Joachim du Bellay suffered so badly—had helped to aggravate his condition. But neither at this period nor later did Richelieu ever pay heed to this infirmity; he could not cure himself, but he refused to yield. He went through his whole life without allowing himself any relaxation or surrender, with the almost superhuman energy of a man who refuses to let his body handicap the plans of his mind.

During this period, it was chiefly as a preacher that Richelieu attracted attention. As an orator he was listened to and appreciated, and he profited still further from the sympathy shown him by Henri iv, who referred to him in a friendly fashion as 'my bishop.' The King, whose most direct and human feelings had not been changed by power, was highly sensitive to the charm of youth, to the keenness

RICHELIEU

of a fine intelligence, to the energy of this marvellous worker who was determined to ignore weariness. What was more, the Richelieus had been good servants to him; they were not lords of high degree, but they were staunch men and sure. Obviously this prelate of three-and-twenty could not yet aspire to posts of the highest responsibility: he had not yet proved his promise. But the promise was such as to forecast a brilliant future; and when the sovereign said to Richelieu: 'You, my bishop . . .' it was very like a secret, almost intimate, pledge that some day he would place him alongside the throne, to work with the monarch for the prosperity of the realm. . . . He did not anticipate that his life would be brutally taken, and certainly associated the Bishop of Luçon with his plans for the future.

Among many other sympathetic connections acquired by his talents, and even more by the King's friendship and an anticipation of his future influence, Richelieu had gained the particular favour of Cardinal du Perron. His position at Court was exceptional. Son of a minister of the Reformed religion, he had abjured Protestantism at an early age after studying the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas. He was a reader to Henri III, a friend of all the great humanists of the day and of the poets of the Pléiade, and a versifier himself. He took orders in 1593, and became a redoubtable polemist in the eyes of his former co-religionists. Perron was perhaps the chief instrument in the conversion of Henri IV, who made him director of his conscience and his guide in ecclesiastical matters. He was Bishop of Evreux, and became a cardinal in 1604; he was a member of the *De Auxiliis* congregation, entrusted with examining the question of Molinism and Thomism, and was appointed Archbishop of Sens in 1606, although

YOUTH

he spent most of his time at Court. He was at once a great theologian and a subtle politician. Honoured by his favour, as by the King's, Richelieu was thus supported by the two chief powers of the French Court. His hopes must have been boundless.

It was, then, by a resolve that seems inexplicably capricious to men of common ambition, that the Bishop of Luçon left Paris and his brilliant life there, to go and take active control of his diocese, the poorest and dingiest in France. He would even reside there. In a man so young and so dazzlingly successful, such a resolve betokens a maturity of thought, a measure of clear-sightedness and a firmness of calculation that give the measure of his genius. Clearly, he was abandoning endless possibilities of immediate favours, but these favours, as he knew, would have been only of secondary rank. For at his age, and lacking in substantial experience, what could he expect? Other benefices? A more important and remunerative bishopric, which he could have obtained by now residing in his own see? That was not enough for him. He must spend long years yet before he could occupy a post to match his talents and his ambition. Would he be like all the other worldly prelates, who delegated their dioceses to their canons, and spend these years of waiting at Court? There would then be a risk of his becoming too accustomed a figure, and that the admiration surrounding him might become dimmed. There are times when absence magnifies a man. The memories which he leaves behind him, when his absence seems to make him less formidable, are more unsullied and effective than everyday impressions, which gradually lose their novelty. A well-timed retirement creates an atmosphere of appreciation, unspoil't by envy or the weariness of common custom, and invests the man

RICHELIEU

with his legend. Besides, this exile was only relative. As a preacher, Richelieu planned to return to Court to deliver periodic sermons; and he did so, these brief appearances being all the more welcome as each was followed by a fresh farewell; and each departure marked a fresh stage in the consolidation of his fame. Meanwhile, in the silence of his palace, amongst all the problems confronting him, the young bishop continued to instruct himself. Throughout his diocese a bishop is a sovereign, an administrator, a guide: an admirable training in the conduct of affairs, in the subtleties of diplomacy, in the process of government. And the young prelate knew better than any one that what was needed to give a solid basis to his dazzling gifts was contact with men, and opportunities of controlling them. Thereby he would acquire the habit of command—which so far was only an inclination—and he would be trained in the study and solution of concrete problems, of a kind to bring all his talents into play by directing them into the channels of actual life.

CHAPTER II

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

OF all the ecclesiastical fiefs in France, the bishopric of Luçon, with its 13,000 *livres* of annual revenue, was certainly the poorest. It was also particularly unpleasant as a residence. A traveller of this epoch, Jouvin, of Rochefort, described it with unpleasing but suggestive awkwardness in these terms: 'The town is situated in Lower Poitou on a small stream in the midst of wide marshes . . . the roads there run between two ditches, and if one is not heedful one may easily lose oneself through the numbers of unmarked roads which disperse themselves in several parts of these marshlands to go to small cottages inhabited by poor folk who live only on small quantities of corn which they sow on the land they have reclaimed from the waterways, and by pasturing a few cattle; and having no wood for fires they use cow dung dried in the sun. . . .'

Thus wrote Jouvin in 1672. But in 1608 that countryside was even more wretched, as it was still scarred by the devastation of the religious wars. The bishop's palace was a cold, dilapidated structure, and the bishop could not so much as emerge from it without going ankle-deep in mud and losing his way amongst the marshes.

'My lodging is a sorry place indeed,' wrote Richelieu, 'for there is nowhere a possibility of lighting a fire, on account of the smoke. . . . There is no place where I can

walk, neither garden nor avenue nor anything of the kind, so that my house is as a prison.'

The region where he found himself thus chained is one of those silent, soft, monotonous countrysides whose languid gentleness may soothe a stricken soul, or a heart wearied by passion or worn out by disappointment and grief, and satisfy men who, freeing themselves from their past, seek a resting-place between the storms of life and the utter peacefulness of death. To a young man suddenly torn from Paris, the fringes of the Court, the manly exercises of the Academy, and even from the long-cherished hope of a brilliant and adventurous career, this was indeed a woeful exile. Men nowadays have learned to love nature with an understanding and enjoyment which were foreign to our ancestors. So intense was the monarchic sentiment of the time that only at Court, amid the artifices of society, could a man of good birth find the climate suited to his spiritual needs. In his new home the Bishop of Luçon was deprived of everything that could lend value to life—an infinitely civilised society, the rapier-play of fashionable conversation, the spectacle of the passions and deceits of secret and violent ambitions, the elegances of attire, the pomp of social gatherings. Everything was lost to him: nothing was left for his thoughts to play upon but the vastness of the sky and earth: and this, to him, was a dreary void. From his window, or on his walks, he could see nothing but the constant, unchanging lines of an almost completely flat landscape which faded vaguely from view in the evenings in the long, faint beams of the sinking sun. A spongy land, this, with water everywhere nibbling at the soil; in the low-lying parts it spread into reedy swamps from which rose bluish, woolly mists drifting in the breezes of the twilight. After a rainy spring the

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

summer heat was overpowering; for a few weeks in autumn the fields and hedges and trees were shot with variegated colour, but all too soon the squalls from seaward stripped the branches bare, and covered the earth with leaves and boughs to soak in the dark, drenching downpours. Instantly the horizon seemed to close in on every hand; the inexhaustible floods from the sky filled up pools and streams to overflowing. A reek of rotting vegetation filled the air everywhere. This was not the dry, keen cold of the mountains, but an icy, piercing, ineluctable dampness, making the body torpid and the heart sick.

The Bishop was delicate. He already suffered from infirmities which were to make his life one long martyrdom: ague, tertiary fever, and that incurable and agonising abscess. He ought to have had a bracing, cheerful climate, and a sky that could raise him above his solitude, a pure, healthy, refreshing air; this country gave him no compensation for what he was losing; its most gracious feature was, in spring, the plaintive cooing of the doves.

The young prelate tried to make a tolerable, or at least a decent, dwelling out of his gloomy, crumbling residence. Poor as he was, he liked to make a fine appearance; not from ostentation, but from the feeling that a certain social rank has a corresponding obligation in appearances, and that, in a position which calls for general respect, a display of poverty is not the way to compel esteem. But he spoke of these domestic trials, if not cheerfully, at least without bitterness. His correspondent and confidante at this time was a lady whom we know only by the letters which he wrote to her, Madame de Bourges. Apparently a native of Poitou, she lived in Paris with her husband, a physician, and to her the young Bishop recounted his difficulties in setting up house. He did not hesitate to tell her more than

RICHELIEU

once: 'I am a beggar!' But although he could not altogether conceal his poverty, he tried to disguise its extent from his entourage. He therefore commissioned his friend to buy some silver plates for him, after careful enquiry about the cost: 'When I have silver plates,' he wrote to her, 'that will raise my noble rank considerably!' There is a mixture of gaiety and irony in that touch; Richelieu knew to a nicety how public opinion is based, and that it is drawn most readily towards all that glitters—so silver plates were what he needed! He had them, and was pleased with them. They performed the expected miracle: 'I am taken for a great gentleman . . .' he was soon writing to Madame de Bourges. Perhaps the impression would have been less striking if it had been known that, through the help of this same lady, he had the shoulders of his predecessor's vestments taken in so as to fit him, in order to save the cost of buying new ones of his own size. Madame de Bourges was tireless in her devotion; she procured furniture, sent him a fur-lined muff because he shivered, and even negotiated the sale of a tapestry so as to raise cash to pay for the silverware, and doubtless also to pay the wages of the servants and steward whom he saw fit to attach to his person. It was a strange blend of pretended ease and actual poverty, borne with a big heart, and also with that good humour which is the privilege of youth; for we must not forget that, after all, our Bishop was only twenty-three.

His solid qualities, his conscience, his sense of duty and authority found ample scope in the obligations of his post. A conspicuous trait in his character was the energy and seriousness with which he threw himself into the task before him. He was a bishop; he must rule his diocese. Moreover, was it not the best way of passing these long days when he saw so seldom a smile, or even a face?

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

The stage of his action was constricted, no doubt, but not devoid of importance, as it held the possibility of testing himself in authority, of examining and solving innumerable problems of financial administration or religious control—in fact, of training himself for a higher lot which, though still undefined, he knew and wished to be his destiny.

His canons and other ecclesiastical subordinates were elderly men, used to ruling the see as they pleased; the worthy priest whom Richelieu succeeded, had borne the title of bishop without wielding the episcopal powers; he had been obliterated by his chapter. It was very distressing for these ecclesiastics to find themselves obliged to obey a young man whom they viewed as a Court prelate, and whose presence on the scene was strangely incomprehensible. Richelieu felt their hostility, which, though he was not afraid of it, increased his difficulties. Furthermore, the ordinary clergy were ignorant, untutored and poverty-stricken, unable to win either affection or respect. It was a disintegrating diocese, a prey to the vigorous Protestantism which was rising in many parts of Poitou. To combat this and to restore Catholic orthodoxy, it was necessary not only to convince the faithful, but also to instruct the priests who would themselves instruct their flocks. Richelieu tried first to gain the sympathy of his subjects. He saw that the best method was to help them in material ways by trying to lighten at least some of the burdens weighing them down. Taking advantage of his Court connections, and appealing directly to Sully, the comptroller of finance, he obtained help for the neediest and reduction of taxes for all the rest. Was this pure calculation on his part? Why should we not grant that he was sincerely sorry for these wretches, harassed by so many cares, and

RICHELIEU

whose wasted land had so often been made battlefields? In any case, it was the surest way of becoming known to them and winning their affection: in this small corner of the kingdom, where he was lord, he was leaning on the people and working for their good, so as to obtain their help towards more exalted goals.

He desired the spiritual seat of his domain to be worthy of its majesty, and required the sums amassed and reserved during the vacancy in the bishopric to be devoted to restoring the cathedral. That noble monument, of fourteenth and fifteenth century construction, had suffered terribly during the struggles against Protestantism. Following the young Bishop's instructions, it was carefully repaired; some portions were rebuilt, and the majesty of a Louis XIII style was successfully blended with the proud inspirations of the Gothic. To obtain reductions of taxes and to rebuild a church sound simple enough; but actually this represents long months of negotiation, calculation, correspondence, supervision, daily tasks that swallow up the hours. And yet that was only a fraction of the pastoral duties, shirked by so many other bishops, to which Richelieu devoted himself with all his strength, notwithstanding his uncertain health, so gravely undermined by this damp, miasmic climate.

Unchecked by the wretched roads, hardly better than muddy tracks, the young prelate insisted on making frequent tours of his diocese. He did not work through the reports of other men or trust to the more or less scrupulous conscience of subordinates. He wished to see for himself, and to let himself be seen; he wished to ask questions, settle doubtful points, decide on conclusions, all unaided. How far his mind was imbued with the religious instinct, it is hard to determine. We do not discern in him the

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

poetic imagination which, in a romantic light, appears as one of the ornaments, even one of the tokens, of faith. His elder brother, who had renounced the bishopric for a monastic life, was doubtless nearer to Christ. But Richelieu was Catholic, and spontaneously such. Catholicism is a social conception, an ideal of human governance, based on religious principles. Amid those principles the young bishop had been reared, and their nature he had explored in the course of deep theological studies. That his religion was sincere and solid, we do not question; that it was a profound and necessary element in his inner life, we can declare no less categorically. As soldier or courtier, he would have practised the faith, by habit or by training, perhaps by natural inclination, but he would not have been what is termed devout. Religion was by him conceived in terms of the Catholic structure and hierarchies, as a wonderfully organised power alongside the monarchy, rendering to the latter in spiritual power what it received therefrom in temporal power, and dominating the monarchy by submission thereto. If he assailed Protestantism, and from the first days of his episcopate engaged on war against it, his reasons were political as well as religious. Doubtless he also felt the natural desire of every man, especially of men of combative temper and solid faith, to fight for the triumph of their convictions: a desire which he would feel all the more because, here in his own diocese, his convictions were threatened. Set here on the territorial frontier of Protestantism, beleaguered by it on all sides, seeing it leaking into and spreading through his demesnes, he found himself at once thrown into an atmosphere of battle.

It was this concern with efficacious proselytising which led him to undertake radical changes in the methods of

RICHELIEU

recruiting his priests. His arrival ended the system of nominations obtained through the support of some great personage. He insisted on sound guarantees both of charity and knowledge, and decided that appointments should be competitive. In this he was acting in accordance with the prescription of the Council of Trent, and followed the lines laid down by great reforming bishops like St. Charles Borromeo, who were much in evidence at the time. But these displays of authority also accorded with his own temperament. We may frequently see in him a rigorous quality, a sense of discipline and duty, which remind us of the soldier rather than the prelate. The former pupil of Pluvinel handles the pastoral cross almost as if it were a sword; the captain insists that his collaborators should be active combatants like himself. At this time he had a project for forming a seminary in his own diocese: it was not brought to pass until later, but he had sketched out its plan.

The young Bishop concerned himself with the provision of spiritual weapons to those priests whose support he wished to have in his daily battling against heresy or lack of faith. A certain number of theological writings, directly inspired by him and prepared under his direction, or even written by himself, attest Richelieu's activity in this field. His chief assistant, J. H. de Flavigny, issued a small work, now exceedingly rare, entitled *Brief and Simple Instructions for Confessors, composed by Master J. H. Flavigny, doctor of theology and vicar-general of Monseigneur the Bishop of Luçon*. Its seventy-eight pages of *Instruction* are followed by twenty other pages containing the *Synod Ordinances* of Richelieu, and these open with the words: 'We, Armand Jean du Plessis de Richelieu, by the Grace of God Lord Bishop of Luçon, to the clergy and people of our Diocese—

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

Greeting!' It is generally held that the *Instructions* were the work of the young prelate. But whether he is wholly or only partly author of the book, it is undoubtedly an expression of his ideas, and in the *Ordinances* he set them forth without the vicar-general as intermediary. At this time, too, he was working on the preparation of another manual, which was to appear later as *The Christian's Instruction*. Unhappily the *Catechism of the Diocese of Luçon*, printed by his orders, has never been found: addressed to the whole body of the faithful, it would have been of still greater interest to us.

The conspicuous trait of these *Brief Instructions*, and what distinguishes them most markedly from the ordinary casuistic treatises, is their practical, straightforward, human quality. Richelieu strips his work of all those subtleties and problems, psychological or physiological, which delight the virtuosity of students of cases of conscience. For him, the exception does not count. With the clear-sightedness and precision of plan which marks the man of action from the pure theorist, he goes straight to the general and concrete. The believer has duties to God, to the Church, to the prince, to his country: such is the division that he adopts, in accordance with the beliefs of the time. Within these heads, he does not bother about nice points and vexing disputation; he goes straight to the goal, proceeding by simple, unyielding affirmations. But nothing is more remarkable than the seeming moderation of his suggestion regarding Protestantism. There we see very clearly the manipulative skill of a ruler who, not yet feeling secure in solid power, is reluctant to seek violent contest, and simply to attain by moderation and prudence such gains as will later enable him to make a more vigorous effort. Furthermore, on this ground he showed his anxiety

RICHELIEU

to restore the best ecclesiastical traditions. This was exactly the conduct of St. Augustine towards the dissidents of his time. In order to bring his priests nearer to their flocks, Richelieu counselled them likewise to read prayers in the vernacular—the usage of the Protestants—instead of in Latin. All he asked of the faithful was simply to refrain from attending ceremonies of hostile cults, and not to give outward signs of adherence to what the Protestant ministers taught against the Church, and not to read their books, which should be destroyed. But when he addressed his clergy, he showed a more rigorous and categorical attitude: with them he need not use the caution and diplomacy which were necessary with the wavering, perhaps half-renegade, Catholics. Accordingly, he absolutely forbade them to celebrate mixed marriages, and threatened excommunication on any who abetted in the burial of heretics in consecrated ground. In the difference of tone adopted in addressing the laity and the clergy, we see, on one hand, the statesman's skill and tact, and, on the other, the churchman's deep hostility towards the people whose most dreaded adversary he would later become.

Throughout the *Brief Instructions* we detect the same concern to mitigate the rigours of Catholicism in order not to estrange the faithful. It would perhaps be exaggerated to assert that there was something of the Jesuit in Richelieu: he was not favourably inclined to the Society of Jesus, even although he seemed to adopt its cautious methods. He did not whittle away doctrine; but towards the sinner he took a long view, in accordance with St. Augustine's classic distinction: 'Stern towards sin, gentle towards the sinner.' But it may be admitted that this indulgent attitude chimed in very happily with that sort of opportunism which is always indispensable to a statesman. He

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

knows that no principle of conduct should be absolute in its application. It is not hard for him to round off its edges when he works in the temporal field; but it is more remarkable to find a priest softening the interpretation of dogmas, and in our present search for the man behind the bishop, as also for the man behind the statesman, such clues are valuable, as enabling us to gauge his suppleness and sagacity: that sense of the relative and the particular which we shall later see at the most important turning-points of his life. Thus, he forbids confessors to impose public penance on sinners whose offences have been hidden. This must surely imply that he attached less importance to a moral lapse than to the bad example which it might suggest, and that he condemns the sin less severely than the resultant scandal. Similarly, in the matter of illicit liaisons, condemned by the Church, he prescribes indulgence for those which have remained clandestine, and, apparently in the same spirit, he tolerates the breaking of a fast in the case of illness, provided that it is not public. Is it only the politician who speaks here? Is it not also, and quite simply, the man of the world? It is only to be expected that this former cavalier, the brilliant pupil of the Academy, this courtier who has lived amidst a maze of intrigue, should display a certain indulgence towards weaknesses from which few men of the world could boast of being exempt. Every paragraph of the *Brief Instructions* reveals the suave urbanity of the psychologist who, familiar with the perplexities of social life and the usages to which men subject themselves, accepts with neither indignation nor unavailing rigour things which it would be very hard to prevent. He absolves feminine coquetry, whatever its refinements, when it is used to bring about a worthy marriage; he even admits that no blame attached to a

RICHELIEU

woman who, without evil intention, receives and reads love letters, provided that she goes no further. Still more curious is the section in the *Instructions* by which he condemns usury only in the case of men exacting it as a trade; he seems, in fact, to authorise what might be termed occasional usury, that is to say, cases where a person having at his disposal a capital sum, seeks to make it fruitful by a loan at a good rate of interest. In these early years, in fact, he was interesting himself in those problems of finance and credit which were to concern him later: for we should recall that during his ministry he tried hard to regularise a loan system by the establishment of public pawnshops.

All in all, this short treatise, too little known and not regarded with due importance, shows its author at pains to reconcile Catholic principles with the necessities of worldly life. It is the work of a man of the world and a statesman who, as an ecclesiastic, seeks to uphold the purity of the faith, but also realises that excessive rigour would inevitably drive many hearts away from it. Perhaps he does not push the spirit of concession so far as the Jesuits. It is none the less true that the Jansenism of Pascal would have found in these pages, had they been open to him, ground for indignation against their softness and facility. But Richelieu's attitude here enables us again to claim that his Catholicism rested on a political as much as on a religious foundation, and that to him it was the paramount form of governance as well as a spiritual rule of life.

Whilst the young Bishop was wholeheartedly devoting himself to all the duties of his charge, he did not lose sight of his ultimate goal: Paris, the Court, and direct service

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

of the King. That he regarded his stay at Luçon as a temporary withdrawal, useful as an education and a possible means of heightening his reputation, but primarily intended as a stepping-stone to greater things, is placed beyond doubt by the revelatory memoir discovered by M. Armand Baschet, which M. Hanotaux was able to place, almost with certainty, as dating from the year 1609. This manuscript, only a few pages long, bears the suggestive title, *Instructions to Myself to Bring Me to Court*. While he gave up his time to administrative tasks and pastoral visitations, to official interventions on behalf of his diocesans, to the preparing of his catechism, his instructions to confessors, his synodal orders, and to preaching, the expectation and the certainty of another destiny did not leave his mind. There lay the object of his secret meditations, and the potency of his calculations, like the devouring force of his ambition, emerges unmistakably from these secret pages in which, alone and in privacy, he traced his plan of activity for the coming day when, having found and furnished the house for which he longed, one 'from which neither God nor the King would be absent,' he could make those regular sojourns in Paris which he felt were necessary to him. At first sight it seems surprising that he should have found it useful to compile for himself this 'compleat courtier's breviary.' His training and his experience in Rome and Paris ought to have armoured him against surprises, and his temperament was not so impulsive or spontaneous that he must fear its aberrations. Why, then, did he meditate a theme so familiar to him, or points of conduct which hardly seemed likely to cause him any difficulties? It seems clear that this brooding over the subject, in which he indulged himself, was really a steady feeding of the flame of his imagination in the midst of his

RICHELIEU

daily round of business. He saw himself, and enjoyed seeing himself, living beside the King, at the Court, which he had quitted to return to it an older and a stronger man. It is hard for us nowadays to imagine the lure of the Court for those who had tasted its poison. '... from which neither God nor the King would be absent'—those words were revealing. In the royal person there was divinity; to approach it was not only to draw nearer to the fountain head of all greatness and all temporal dignities, but also a deeper, a more intoxicating satisfaction: to live by the King's side meant living over and above mankind. And when Richelieu, in the solitude and silence of his melancholy bishopric, sat down to settle thus his own lines of conduct, it was not because he can have been afraid of forgetting them, but because, in this evocation of satisfaction which he lacked, he found an intense and heady delight.

In these few pages the person of the monarch naturally stands in the foreground. Richelieu's words might apply to another sovereign, but it is solely of Henri iv that he is thinking: and he could not foresee that Henri's days were numbered. It is Henri iv that he sketches in these swift lines: 'He likes witticisms and quick repartees. He does not care for those who are not bold in speech, but they call for respect. The important thing is to know which way the wind blows, and not to take him in those moods when he consents to speak to nobody.' He adds: 'It has been unfortunate that one was never able to serve him except in small matters . . . nothing is impossible to someone of good will towards so great a master, so good a King. . . .' And he concludes: 'Take care to stop the talk when the King drinks.'

But it is important also to be careful in one's dealings

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

with the great: 'One must not be absent-minded, nor allow one's eyes to wander, nor look sad or depressed when someone speaks, and one must be attentive and pleasant towards people, but more by paying heed and keeping silent than by speech or applause. . . . The more honoured and respected one is, the more humble and respectful should one's manner be.'

Regarding correspondence, he tells us, one should be extremely prudent: write as little as possible, but yet neglect no replies to letters, taking care always to make copies of the letters one sends; as for dangerous papers, never be so rash as to preserve them, however well hidden, and burn them without hesitating.

But above all it is on the need for silence and dissimulation that we see him insisting. The art of silence—making oneself the tomb of secrets entrusted to one, cloaking with darkness the projects which, if they are suspected, become impossible, leaving those whom one despises in ignorance of the real feelings which they inspire, feigning imperviousness to insult in order to prepare one's revenge more surely, lying if lying is necessary, or at least 'making answers that are like those retreats which, without flight or confusion or resistance, save both men and equipment'—such are the main heads of the worldly code which the young Bishop of Luçon outlined for himself. In every line we can detect a burning desire for the coming of the day when, at last, he can use the weapons which he has so carefully sharpened.

The manifold minutiae of his episcopal duties did not allow Richelieu to take much part in the affairs of the outside world. Even if he had had the time, this humble provincial see would not have given him the means. But he had a few friends, picked companions, whom he enjoyed

RICHELIEU

meeting for distraction. They were austere distractions, consisting chiefly of controversial exercises and the practice of swordsmanship directed against the Reformed religion. If we try to picture the development of Richelieu's mind chronologically, to determine the order in which his later efforts were presented to him, the first stage that we discover is the struggle against Protestantism; and into that he seems to have been drawn with the greatest constancy. His tendencies were emphatically Gallican; and he was too much of a politician, and too human, too much of a man of the world, ever to accept the relentless ruggedness of Jansenist doctrine. But he enjoyed the company of several men who, ten or twelve years later, were to give their official form to the Jansenist theses and to found the Jansenist sect. The Bishop of Luçon became friendly with the Bishop of Poitiers, Chasteigner de la Rocheposay. His father, Rocheposay d'Abain, had been a friend of Richelieu's own father; they had both been with the Duc d'Anjou in Poland, and returned to France with him. Their linked destinies were prolonged in the lives of their sons, who, almost at the same date, took control of the two sees of Luçon and Poitiers. Chasteigner de la Rocheposay, even more than Richelieu, brought to his episcopate the charm and the commanding methods of an army captain; he liked to ride about, lance in hand, and wearing a breastplate, escorted not by ecclesiastics, but by armed men on foot and on horseback, under the command of an *abbé* acting as sergeant. 'The Chasteigners (chestnuts) have always borne fruits worthy of kings, and, truth to tell, it is hard indeed to toy with them and not be pricked.' So ran a contemporary criticism of the prelate whom Richelieu made his most frequent companion. And it was no surprise that so combative a bishop took as his vicar Duvergier de

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

Hauranne, granting him the Abbey of Saint-Cyran, the name of which he was to make famous during the heroic period of Jansenism. Duvergier was, moreover, the friend of Boutheillier, the Dean of Luçon, who had rallied to the young Bishop with all his power and outstanding ability, and worked for Richelieu's advancement. Naturally, therefore, Richelieu joined hands with Duvergier: there was no inclination to dreaming in the men whom he made his friends—they were all trainers of men, theologians for whom controversy became a form of warfare, men of dynamic temperament, avid for activity. To keep in closer touch with them, Richelieu made frequent stays in his Abbey of Coussay, not far from Poitiers, and from a letter of the Bishop of Orleans we know that their common distraction was 'unrelenting study'; and the Bishop added: 'Men do not put themselves to such pains without some great purpose in view.'

The great purpose was the struggle against Protestantism, and from these controversial gatherings emerged the polemical works which Richelieu was later to publish.

Boutheillier's affection for his bishop, and his constant devotion in his service, were to prove valuable to Richelieu's fortunes. An ambitious man with high aims, heading for the peaks, by disguising his desires, stands in need of the collaboration of these friends who spread hints here, there and everywhere, propagating celebrity, and gradually creating round the object of their support an atmosphere of expectation and admiration. This was the role played by Boutheillier; and Father Joseph was to bring still more to Richelieu the almost occult collaboration of political genius. In this case the roles are reversed. Father Joseph desired nothing for himself, but was animated by a religious passion amounting almost to fanaticism, and saw in

RICHELIEU

Richelieu the man who could make the ideas for which he lived certain of victory: he devoted himself to Richelieu as the stronger man, but it was to use him for the greater glory of God and the Church. It was also at Luçon that this alliance was born, a blend of deep friendship and community of religious ideals, which no later events were ever to break.

François le Clerc du Tremblay, generally known to history simply as Father Joseph, was a few years older than Richelieu. Coming of a good Angevin family, and destined for a soldier's career, he had manifested a monastic vocation and entered the Franciscan Order. In teaching and preaching he had soon shown proof of vigorous talents. Born for a life of action and organisation, for the guiding of men's conscience and conduct, passionate in his beliefs, but acting always with prudence and circumspection, he brought to all his undertakings determination and boldness, as well as the selflessness of a man who works solely for an ideal, to which he would sacrifice himself as he would other men. Realising his unrivalled qualities, his superiors made of him a militant missionary, whom they despatched to bear the word of God into regions threatened by the infections of heresy. Thus it was that Father Joseph found himself on what might be called the Poitevin front, and was naturally brought into touch with La Rocheposay and Richelieu. For several years the Capuchin and the Bishop of Luçon worked side by side in reforming the monastic house of Fontevault, that famous establishment whose abbesses belonged traditionally to the royal family, but whose rules had become gradually so whittled down that the nuns lived a quite worldly, and sometimes scandalous life. The two men also

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

learned to understand one another, and each realised how great an accession of strength would come from their collaboration, in working for the triumph of their convictions or ambitions. Nothing was to disrupt their agreement.

The young Bishop of Luçon was impatient to give scope to his talents on a wider stage. His skill in administering his diocese, his vigorous wielding of authority, the admiration and esteem of his friends in the society where he was in training for future battles, all worked to heighten his self-confidence. A proof that this necessary, and in many ways salutary, exile was extremely irksome to his avidity for action and pre-eminence is to be found in a rash step which he took early in the year 1610, which shows us vividly the chafing of his ambition.

In January, 1610, there was to be a meeting of the assembly of clergy in Paris. It instantly occurred to Richelieu that he might very well go to represent the province of Bordeaux, in which his diocese lay. The honour of his nomination would have brought him nothing beyond a chance of prominence and of being talked about, of making fresh connections and widening the small circle of his admirers and partisans. That was all he wanted. It is not at all likely that, at that moment, he was definitely thinking of one day wielding power; if he did, it could only have been a vague dream, at the age when a man gladly pictures himself scaling every summit, whilst readily resigning himself to halting half-way. But, just because he wanted everything, without knowing just what he did want, he could not let slip any opportunity of standing out in a prominent position and proclaiming himself. What positive result would come of it? None, perhaps. But he

RICHELIEU

would have been in association with the body of eminent prelates sent to Paris by the provinces, and the very fact of his youth would have added further prestige to his election.

Accordingly, he busied himself with all his power and all the influence he could bring into play, towards his nomination as representative of the province of Bordeaux. Following the formula already used by candidates, and still so used to this day, he wrote to Monseigneur de Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, declaring that he had never himself entertained any thoughts of putting forward his name, but that the bishops of adjoining sees had so insistently urged him to do so that he could not escape from their desire. The formula is familiar; it deceives nobody; and if Richelieu imagined that it would fool the Archbishop of Bordeaux, it is clear proof how far his passion was blinding him! He did not omit to send his friend Bouthellier down to Bordeaux, where he paid visits and made overtures with assiduity. They were foredoomed to failure. The ambitious young man, in too great a hurry for advancement, had not discovered—or, what was more blameworthy, had not been shrewd enough to guess—that Monseigneur de Sourdis himself, the Archbishop, felt amply fitted to go to Paris as representative of the province in which he held the highest ecclesiastical office; and of these two candidates the other bishops were naturally obliged to choose the elder, the more important—and the less formidable; for it is one of the weaknesses of ambition, when it discloses itself too incautiously, to rouse instant and active opposition amongst all those who inwardly believe themselves no less worthy of honours and responsibilities and will in no way further the advancement of a rival. Richelieu was beaten, and as soundly as he could

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

be; for a second delegate was to accompany the Archbishop, and even for this subordinate post he was not designated.

Disappointed, but hiding his chagrin, he returned to his theological activities; and to escape his entourage—perhaps also in some fear of the smiles of his chapter—he sought refuge in his priory of Coussay, a sick and fevered man.

It was in a letter from Boutheillier, who was visiting Paris, that Richelieu learned, four months later, of the murder of Henri iv.

The shock of this news overwhelmed him, as it did the whole of France. He could not forget the favour shown him by the King, to whom he owed his bishopric, and through whose kindness his family's fortunes had been greatly helped. 'So good a master, so great a King . . .' he had himself written, in pages of indubitable sincerity. But it was not in his nature to waste much time over his feelings, still less to succumb to them: he was instantly wondering what might be the possible consequences to himself of this event and of all the inevitable confusion. There need be no question: it was not of the dead monarch, nor of his realm, that Richelieu thought—it was of himself, and himself alone, with that burning spontaneity, so keen-eyed and so astoundingly egotistical, which conjures up a host of devouring ambitions round the death-beds of great men. Alive, Henri iv meant for Richelieu the certainty of always securing the favourable consideration which even outstanding merit must have, if posts or benefices should come within his reach. But all the great posts and dignities were held by others. The sovereign was surrounded by a Court of elderly men who had served him in the field, rough-mannered and touchy men,

RICHELIEU

who stood elbow to elbow round him, and seemed to be in no mind to leave any room for a newcomer unknown to themselves, who might, if given a foothold near the King, eject the established figures. The friendship of the 'good master' and 'great King' was, in fact, more of a moral than a positive satisfaction. In any case, it could not come into active play for many a long year. Old age and death might do their work, and, all things considered, it seemed very hard indeed to rise except by the slow ladder of years.

The assassination of Henri iv left Richelieu with a sense that he was suddenly confronted by countless possibilities, which may have been vague, but were all the wider in their potentialities for being hazy, and that the general position was grave and perplexing. The age of the future king—he was just nine—left all influence and the whole of the real power in the hands of Marie de Medici, and this, of course, meant a complete change in the personnel of favoured personages at Court. These unmanageable old soldiers, hard and arrogant men, but filled with sincere love of country and king, would be succeeded by a cabal of insidious flatterers and Italian adventurers, rapacious and unscrupulous, dangerously crafty and fundamentally heedless of the public welfare. To Richelieu this assassination was a wonderful stroke of fortune, and if he did not turn it to profit it would not be for lack of taking the necessary steps. His brother, Henri de Richelieu, happened to be in the particularly good graces of Marie de Medici: no sooner was she widowed than she gave very tangible evidence of this by diverting to his profit a substantial sum taken from the resources of Sully. This young courtier, who prescribed the fashion and was not apparently troubled by useless scruples, was to prove a highly serviceable in-

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

termediary between the Queen and his brother, the Bishop. My Lord of Luçon could count on him: the caste spirit was highly developed in the Plessis family. Father Joseph, and his friend Father Bérulle, a respected Oratorian who was grateful to Richelieu for having invited his Order to Luçon, had considerable power over Marie de Medici's mind. And so she was closely beset by a small group which represented at once the most agreeable elements in the Court and the most influential in the clergy and was in all ways ready to push the interests of Armand du Plessis with the utmost energy.

Believing, however, that man can best serve his interests by looking after them himself, the young Bishop conceived the idea of addressing a long personal letter to the Queen, pledging his services and proffering a vow of fidelity. It was a singular, even a slightly ludicrous, idea: nobody else in France, no governor of a province, no archbishop, thought of taking such a step, but this young prelate, rather overbold in his initiative, showed, it must be confessed, the importance he attached to himself and the high levels at which he pitched his desires. He was not content to promise his support to the King; it was to the Queen that he addressed himself, discharging a salvo of flattery towards her, offering himself, even imposing himself, with a cynicism which in such circumstances shows us how far a man can be led astray by ambition, even a man of genius. He wrote to Marie de Medici: 'Although it would seem that, after the lamentable disaster inflicted upon us by a murderous hand, we must be incapable of ever again feeling gladness in our hearts, yet we are aware of an ineffable gladness that it has pleased God, by giving us the Queen as Regent of the State, to lead us forth from the extremity of disaster which has befallen us and grant us

RICHELIEU

the most useful and necessary boon that we could have wished for in our unhappiness. . . .’

But the Bishop was prudent enough not to despatch the letter without taking counsel with his brother and friends. He addressed the letter to Henri de Richelieu, asking him to transmit it into the proper hands. The group of intimates were not so much surprised at this haste as shocked by such clumsiness; they felt that the best service they could render Richelieu was to keep silent regarding this initiative and the unrequested vow of fealty; and Boutheillier wrote frankly that, as nobody had written in this vein, he would do better to conform to the general attitude. The young Bishop had to fall in with this advice, but he was anxious at least to put in an appearance in Paris and let it be known that he was quite ready to remain there. We know indirectly that he wrote round his friends, and to the ecclesiastics of the Queen’s circle, announcing his arrival and his intention of presenting his homage to the sovereign. Having thus prepared the way, he set off, and showed himself. It may be assumed that he exerted all the necessary energy, and perhaps a little more. But he met with fresh disappointment; the Queen did not request his services. Moreover, the move was ill-timed. The murder of Henri IV was too recent for any change to have been made in the leaders of the regime; the same men were on the bridge, keeping a close eye on Marie de Medici, who had not yet emancipated herself and was letting the ship go forward on its own momentum. Richelieu realised that she did not need him to take the wheel, that nobody would offer it to him, and that by exposing his ambition too conspicuously he was running the risk of rousing enmity and distrust which would later raise barriers against him.

For a second time, cruel disappointment brought home

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

to him the dangers of precipitancy; he returned empty-handed to his diocese—and wisdom may have made him realise that he was lucky not to have lost a great deal. But all this rankled. His ambition was such that he regarded it as an injustice not to have seen it fulfilled. His anger was shown by his decision not to go to Luçon itself, the climate of which, he said, was too unhealthy for him, and he went into retreat in his priory, whence he addressed splenetic and violent letters to his vicars. He had to make someone feel the weight of his authority—a diversion after this second reverse—and he gave free play to his wrath, convincing himself of his own strength: ‘It would seem from your letter,’ he wrote, ‘that you were in sorry temper when you took up the pen. . . . If a fly sting you, you ought to kill it, and not make others feel the prick. . . . You say that you would gladly renounce the title I bestowed upon you. I force nobody to take benefits from me. You preach free will to others, and it is open to you to make use thereof yourself. . . .’

This blunt, hard-hitting, almost insulting tone, surprising in an ecclesiastic and misplaced in a young man addressing inferiors of greater age, gives the measure of his rancour and of the need which he felt to giving vent to his anger on somebody.

Thenceforward he lived almost entirely at Coussay, bemoaning his poverty, which seems to have been very irksome to him, and chewing the cud of his bitterness, building up feverishly a dream of revenge. His correspondence with highly placed personages took up much of his time. From afar he laid siege to those who might one day be of use to him—better tactics than just an open appearance in the field. His friends talked of him. They became used to counting on him, to weighing up his wisdom, to

RICHELIEU

taking it for granted that he was destined for an outstanding position. The acrimonious tone of his dealings with his vicars left him in time; without going so far as to excuse himself, he spoke of his bad health in a way that suggested that physical suffering may have caused these outbursts, and he was all gentleness, indulgence, universal kindness—the good shepherd, the spiritual pastor whose sole concern, it seemed, was the happiness of those in his care. This fatherly goodness of the young Bishop was admired, commented on with gratitude, and his renown was widened and strengthened.

Then, at the end of the year 1613, he again left for Paris. But this time he was resolved that his journey should not be in vain. Having been unable to make his services directly desired by Marie de Medici, he would this time proffer his friendship to the man who exercised direct control over her—the Italian Concini. It was a game of heads or tails. Enmity was open between the favourite and the princes. If Concini fell, he would drag down all who had been siding with him—a grave peril. But if he triumphed, how grateful he would be to one who had served him! Neutrality offered the most dangerous solution: whoever proved victorious, there would be no gratitude towards the cautious who showed no sympathy until victory was won. So he had to make a choice.

This he did not make lightly. Aided by his friends' advice from Paris, the counsel of sage clerics, subtle and cautious intriguers familiar with the secrets of consciences, with the strength and weakness of parties, with the differing chances of the confronting foes, Richelieu chose Concini. After seeing the Italian in Paris, he wrote to him endeavouring to show the sincerity of his protestations, as might be seen from the fact that he would give him written

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

assurances and so, in the event of failure, provide dangerous weapons against himself. There was boldness in this, a certain elegance too, perhaps a kind of challenge flung to fate. The letter offered unreserved alliance with Concini: 'Constant in my honour for those to whom I have once vowed my service, I write to assure you of my continued respect. . . . I shall beg you only to believe that my promises will ever be followed by effective deeds, and so long as I am honoured by your affection, that I shall always be able to serve you worthily.'

Such were the terms in which Richelieu addressed a man in whom he must certainly have seen the pettiness and meanness of his intellect and morals. But success is not attained without a surrender of conscience. Richelieu considered only the end, and accepted the means.

When he returned to his see, he did not seem to have notably modified his position. In fact, nothing had altered, and those who judged him from outside might have thought that his journey had availed him nought. He himself knew that it was bound to be fruitful, and that he had played the right cards.

The Court was divided into two hostile camps. On one side stood the Queen-Mother, the former ministers of Henri iv, and Concini, who skilfully took his stand by their side so as to make a parade of his fidelity; on the other were ranged the so-called princes—Condé, Bouillon, Nevers, Mayenne, who were anxious to assure themselves of money and power during this interregnum. But they could not act alone: they were leaders without a party. Accordingly, they tried to stir up a cabal of malcontents against the Queen-Mother and her counsellors. In a famous manifesto Condé tried to bring them into line, to reveal them to themselves, and to dictate their line of

RICHELIEU

action. He condoled with the Church, fallen from its splendour and excluded from the embassies and councils; he condoled with the ruined nobility, expelled from judicial and financial posts; he condoled with the people, crushed down for the benefit of the rich. In fact, he worked for a union of the three orders against the monarchy, without proposing any positive remedy against these evils, but with a hope of stirring up widespread rebellion, in the midst of which the leaders of the movement would make their fortunes, if not those of France. In support of his manifesto Condé made a feint of taking up arms; and the Queen instantly raised an army. Nobody really intended war; neither side felt sure enough of winning. But a flash of steel would save faces: and the conspirators seemed to have taken action, the government to have resisted, and negotiations could thereupon be opened.

In exchange for peace and general reconciliation, the Regent, by the treaty of Sainte-Menehould (May 15, 1614), granted the demands of the rebel princes, that is to say, personal advantages, important positions, governorships of provinces, and large grants of money. It looked as if they might have felt satisfied, but they could not cynically drop the collective claims which had been the pretext for all this agitation. They had appealed to the three orders, and so they obtained the summoning of a meeting of the States General, in which all three orders should express their own desires and discontents. They hoped to dominate this assembly, and to obtain therefrom fresh weapons against Concini and the Queen Regent, and to improve the advantages already gained by the discussions and by the pact of Sainte-Menehould.

Through the well-informed Boutheillier, Richelieu learned of this decision to summon the States General long

THE BISHOPRIC OF LUÇON

before it was officially proclaimed. When he received the command to convoke the three orders of his diocese for the election of their representative, he had already ensured the choice which was of supreme importance to himself—his own. On August 24 he was appointed to represent the clergy of his province in the States General at the meeting in Paris in October. He might now regard his years of apprenticeship and waiting as over, and an end put to all those false manœuvres and to the useful but obscure toils in which he could no longer engage without the bitterness of feeling himself unknown. Even if the meeting of the States proved ineffective, it was a great drama in which participation was an honour. With his diplomacy, his subtlety, his immense knowledge, and, above all, with his masterly oratory and skill in debate, Richelieu knew that now he would attract the attention of all his colleagues—that is, of the whole of France—and that there would be few rivals to dispute his pre-eminence.

CHAPTER III

THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615

THE meeting of the States General, under the presidency of the sovereign, was one of the most splendid and moving solemnities of monarchical France. From time to time, and seldom enough for this temporary assembly to retain the character of a majestic exception, the whole nation thus found itself enabled to make its voice heard; and although the three orders deliberated separately, they sat together for the inaugural and the closing sessions. For several months the life of the country was suspended or altered by high hopes and long intrigues. The efforts of existing power tended to nullify the claims of the assembly which it authorised. Carefully prepared elections kept out, as far as possible, independent or headstrong spirits; but some remained, to animate discussion with their zeal. If all three orders could have agreed on a common programme, the government would have had to bow. But national unity was not yet forcible enough, nor securely enough rooted in sentiment, to enable each section to make the necessary sacrifices or concessions; class interests far outweighed those of the general weal; long confused debates ended by bottling up every question, wearing down energy, rousing irreparable conflicts which in the end aggravated the disunion of the orders and left everything as before. After the country's fever, nothing remained but lassitude, discouragement and rancour.

THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615

The States General of 1614 were faced by grave problems. But they may then have seemed less clearly defined than they do in retrospect; it generally happens that in large assemblies the multiplicity of detail stifles the questions of really capital importance, which are obscured, and everything is brought down to the common level of confusion and chatter. Only a few penetrating minds achieve a proper view of this chaos, but that is not enough to give them strength to act. From the point of view of France, the States General of 1614 could not reach any positive result. Nicolas Pasquier did not hesitate, in an energetic letter to the Queen, to write: 'Through these examples you will know beyond a doubt that this assembly of the States has produced only paper wealth and some practical evils. . . . A secret which you must learn is never to call the States, especially during the King's minority, when there is a prince who, to have a following wind in the midst of a people, can make himself a faction leader.' And he told her further: 'All these individual men, returning to their provinces, will serve as torches to light new flames and start fresh troubles.'

These were wise words, and would be borne out by facts, but Marie de Medici, though capable of whims and intrigue and fury, was too weak in energy and authority to stand up against the determination of the princes, who expected much from the discontents which they had been assiduous in keeping alive. But they had not contrived to prevent the elections from being manipulated according to the desires and indications of the Queen-Mother and her advisers: the majority among the deputies was definitely monarchic, and the government, which first agreed to hold the meeting at Sens, felt strong enough to summon it to meet in the capital itself on October 26.

RICHELIEU

M. Hanotaux's large and learned book contains the description of the procession and Mass which inaugurated the meeting; here a few features only must suffice to indicate the importance and splendour of the spectacle in which the young Bishop of Luçon participated, certain that from this great crowd of men he was at last about to emerge into his own centre of renown. At ten o'clock in the morning the throng of deputies passed in file before the King, the Queen and the princes of the blood. Then the procession, leaving the cloister of the Augustinians, came along the quays of the Seine, which it crossed at the bridge of Notre-Dame, and moved over to the Cathedral between two lines of soldiers of the guard. Custom ordained that it should be preceded by a group of poor wretches, crippled and blind, lame and deformed, whose rags and visible woes should incline men's minds to kindness and pity. It was a picturesque and tragic spectacle, hardly justifiable except as a kind of Christian symbolism. Next came the mendicant orders, who took precedence in the social side next to these. Then were seen the chapters of Notre-Dame and the Sainte-Chapelle, followed by the dignitaries of the University, all of them wearing their velvets and ermine in a glow of vivid colouring. This was the first part of the procession, an official representation, not of France, but of the capital. The States came second. Between the lines of armed men, and over their heads, the crowd could view first the nameless throng of the deputies of the Third Estate, two hundred representatives in black clothes, bearing the attributes of justice or of finance, pacing slowly along, deeply conscious of their importance, hieratical, carrying candles in their hands. After the Third Estate came the Nobles, in Court dress, swords at their sides. And lastly the Clergy, ranged in the hierarchic

THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615

order of the Catholic Church, which has founded an earthly power on the precepts of Christ, and in the heart of which inequality is boldly proclaimed in the attributes and adornments which interpret it to the eye. First, in ranks of four, came the ordinary deputies, common priests or monks; then the bishops and archbishops, magnificent in sumptuous silk; then the three cardinals, robed in scarlet; and lastly the canopy of gold brocade beneath which walked the Archbishop of Paris bearing the Blessed Sacrament, surrounded by the princes and followed by the King, whose frail white-clad figure came next in order, under another canopy, after the miraculous Host. Round him were his mother, the esquires in attendance, the ladies of honour, the princes, the marshals, all the Court dignitaries. The Parlement, the Châtelet, the lesser judicial bodies, and the archers and sergeants, rounded off this great line, inversely reproducing the ascending grades of its first part.

The opening session was held next day, in the Hôtel Bourbon. The crowd and confusion were such that the courtiers, abandoning the places reserved for onlookers, or unable to find room therein, took up a position in the space where only deputies should have been sitting. When silence was at last produced in this strangely assorted crowd, the boy King rose, greeted the representatives of the various orders, and declared the meeting open. A whole series of speeches had then to be listened to, but the one that everybody expected was not delivered. Condé, who was to make a public and solemn declaration of his manifesto, remained in his place, motionless and enigmatic. Doubtless he thought the game was lost, and felt it useless to emphasise his defeat by a fresh intervention.

To an ambitious man of such spirit as Richelieu, who

was filled with a clear and proud consciousness of his genius, this wavering and confused gathering, throbbing with hostile passions, must have seemed symbolic of the general bewilderment in the midst of which his personality would stand out sharp and clear. Looking round at those about him, and wondering what claims they were seeking to make triumphant, he saw them all disarmed by their own dissensions and class hatreds. On points of detail alliances might possibly take form; but they would be precarious and ephemeral, limited to a definite objective, and lacking in sincerity, because they would not obliterate the deep divergences which declared themselves over other issues. How would the Third Estate join hands with the clergy, who submitted to the Pope, obeying Spanish influences and fully prepared to affirm the supremacy of the spiritual power over the monarchy? It is in the ideas of the Third Estate that we can discern the dawn, if not yet of patriotism, at least of the sense of French independence. In this domain the Third Estate was uncompromising, and ventured to register this affirmation at the head of its notes, that the King held his power only from God. The Church, no less categorical, tried to subject him to the Pope, and regarded it as a positive abuse that laymen should make bold to uphold a personal theory in religious affairs. Between the Third Estate and the nobility there was a cleavage no less marked. The deputies of the Third Estate, outraged by the lavish pensions which drained the public treasury into the pockets of nobles, called for the suppression of these generousities. Such a measure would indeed have sufficed to provide the wherewithal to cure all the miseries of the realm. But the Third Estate had privileges of its own: had it not the inheritance of the charges of justice? This was what roused the anger, genuine or

THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615

assumed, of the nobles, who found in this circumstance a retort, an argument, a weapon. After the plenary session, discussion between Chamber and Chamber would take place; deputations would go to and fro; speeches would beget speeches. It was plain that nothing would result. What, then, was the deep-rooted malady attacking this assembly, representative of all the regions and classes of the kingdom; if not the sickness from which France itself was suffering—the absence of authority?

At the end of the hall, on a dais erected in a recess, the boy King, in white silk, sat on his throne backed by purple velvet hangings sprinkled with gold lilies. Round him stood the Queen, the princes of the blood, the highest dignitaries of the Court, the Secretaries of State. He was a weakly lad of thirteen, and his majority had just been proclaimed. For the moment, clearly, nothing was to be expected of him; but what hopes could be held for the future? That must have been the question asked by the Bishop of Luçon when he watched the pale, bored, sulky boy, fatigued by this endless ceremonial and incomprehensible speech-making. The boyish face had no light in it; it showed no signs of marked intelligence, nor of character and will. The heavy, gloomy features were those of the Medici; there was no trace of the boldness and pride of the Bourbons. Richelieu knew what was said about the King by those who had been in touch with him: inactive, incurious, mediocre in his gifts for study, lacking in vivacity and gaiety, and interested only in physical diversions, his most decided tastes being for riding and hunting. No doubt, something better could have been made of this mediocre character, if someone could have found ways of access to its heart, and discovered those secret springs

RICHELIEU

which every human being possesses and through which influence can be exerted. But who had troubled to do so? His childhood had been handed over to servants, who basely flattered him and who simply attracted his favour by satisfying his instincts. He may not have been, as Saint-Simon declares, a pervert; if he were, it may well have been the result of a truly criminal intention on the part of his entourage. But it seems clear, in any case, that he was weak and spiritless, and had, so to speak, a moral as well as a physical stammer, now uncontrollable in his violence, now sunk in unreasoned despair, a youth little fitted, in fact, for holding sovereign power.

In that Court grouped round him, behind the masks of those faces, Richelieu also knew what passions were lying hid. Who had a thought for France? Who for the kingdom? Not this Italian Regent, a woman subject to favourites whose sole aim was to enrich themselves; nor these princes who had declared war on her, not for love of the common weal, but solely because their cupidity and selfishness were being hampered; nor yet these ageing ministers, clinging to power merely for the vain satisfaction of wielding it. To the eyes of a penetrative observer, greed, routine and blindness were the characteristics of what stood for authority at this critical hour when a child had succeeded his murdered father. But notwithstanding everything, one preponderant influence remained in this bankruptcy of government, that of the Queen-Mother. She had the prestige of royalty, and held the self-seeking devotion of those about her, all the more eager because without her they would be ciphers, and she had the status of a royal widow, the mother of the King, and her title as Regent. She had also to face the hostility inspired by the princes. And so it was towards her that Richelieu, as he was bound

THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615

to do, steered his course. When certain highly placed clerics did not hesitate to attack the Queen and criticise her government, when Miron, Bishop of Angers, even publicly formulated the sternest criticism against her, the Bishop of Luçon sided with those who condemned this attitude and professed their loyalty to the Florentine. It was he, as representative of his order, who had to go and inform the nobles of this conciliatory attitude, to which a majority of the clergy had rallied, and he certainly attracted the Regent's gratitude and sympathy when he expounded the proposals voiced in the ecclesiastical Chamber: 'The representatives of the clergy deplore the desire to separate and divide the King's authority with that of the Queen his mother and, testifying to their deep resentment at the offence offered to their Majesties, proffer the assurance of their complete obedience, loyalty and service.' In this the Bishop of Luçon was only the spokesman of his colleagues; but it was significant that he was chosen; it was a recognition that he had been one of the foremost in the warmth and zeal of his professions of loyalty. To him it was indisputably a victory; for, in such circumstances, the man who, in the name of large numbers, carries out an action pleasing to the established power is always the man to whom its reward will accrue. He had made his name known as that of an ardent servant, an ally, a friend—which was his whole desire.

Richelieu had not long to wait before he could congratulate himself on his manœuvre. The Queen showed her gratitude by naming him as orator for the clergy in the closing session. The States had sat for four months, and the questions which, at the start, seemed clear, were by now conclusively wrapped in darkness. Discussions now were futile and impassioned, often insulting, ending

RICHELIEU

in brawls, and once even in murder. Nevertheless, the deputies persisted. Aware of the futility of their efforts, they hoped by continued meetings to justify their presence and that suddenly they would unearth some remedy for all the evils of the realm. Actually their assembly and debates had made clear the complete uselessness of the body, the impotence of which had been foreseen by its best minds. The Regent ordered an end to be made, and that their papers should be handed in on February 23, 1615. It was on this occasion that Richelieu, designated as representative of the whole clergy of France, rose to speak in the hall of the Hôtel Bourbon, which he had entered, four months before, lost in the crowd of ecclesiastics, an ordinary deputy of his province. Selected at the request of Marie de Medici on January 24, he had had a month to consider and prepare his address. It lasted for an hour and was highly appreciated: 'He had contented everyone, with offence to none.'

The speech, which the young Bishop caused to be printed a few days later, marks his real entry into public life; and we can imagine the deep satisfaction, the fullness of pride and satisfied ambition which he felt as he delivered it. He was then twenty-nine, and the whole of the Church in France had chosen him as its spokesman. This was no question of a sermon on the occasion of some festivity, or a Gospel text, conforming to the pulpit traditions beyond which a preacher could not stray; nor was this an assembly of the faithful or of friends; his listeners in this vast hall through which his voice resounded alone, those who fixed their gaze on his erect figure and were learning to know him, if they were still ignorant of him, were the chosen men of the Three Estates, come hither from every province of France, the magistracy, the clergy, archbishops,

THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615

cardinals, the nobility, the ministers, the Queen and her Court, and the King himself. And the questions he dealt with were not just points of faith, nor religious doctrine, reserved for specialists; nor were they expositions of Christian doctrine made easy for the commonalty, or offered to a fashionable public—they were living, actual, concrete problems: in fact, problems of government. He himself had never been deceived as to the importance of the States General or the results which they might conceivably attain; in his *Memoirs* he disposed of them in a word when he concluded: 'Thus the States General ended, as they had begun.' But fruitless as they may have been from a general point of view, they were far from fruitless as regards his own career; and for this reason we should pay close attention to this oration, as marking a decisive stage in Richelieu's career, and no less in the formation of his ideas.

The general foundation of Richelieu's argument was the idea of the primacy of the ecclesiastical order in the State: all problems of government should be considered, and could be solved, with reference to the authority of the Church, that is to say, to divine authority. The nobility, the Third Estate, and royalty were subordinate to the Church—a subordination which need offend no Catholic conscience, because, in essence, it is only a testimony of man's debt to the divine power. Furthermore, we can discern all Richelieu's diplomatic skill in this argument. The Church had no intention of using her power in the temporal field, for ends which appertain to the latter; on the contrary, she sought to make her power the investment of a new force which would be added to the forces already at the monarchy's disposal. Its primacy was recognised,

RICHELIEU

the ecclesiastical order would devote that force to the service of the State, that is, of royalty, and, in the present circumstances, a royalty whose attributes were placed in the hands of the Regent. Thus, once again, Richelieu's argument tended to proclaim the legitimacy of the powers conferred on Marie de Medici and the fervour of devotion with which the French clergy—himself included—were inclined to lend her their help.

Such was the theme of this long and subtle exposition. But in detail he could not avoid certain embarrassing problems. His manifest desire was not to alienate either the Third Estate, whose claims were only too well justified, or the nobility, towards whom he inclined from his own birth and character. And so, in order to give the Third Estate a semblance of satisfaction, he supported, in his own name and in that of the Church, the claim directed against the abuse of pensions distributed to the nobles; but he stripped it of violence and demagogic trappings, toning it down so that it seemed no longer threatening, even to those at whom it was aimed. Royal liberality he did not condemn; on the contrary, he commended it, 'but well ordered and justly distributed, following the proportion which should exist between what is given and what can legitimately be given.' An excellent formula, by which all abuses could at once be either proscribed or prescribed; each camp could interpret it according to taste; already, most unmistakably, a statesman was speaking. The intervention was all the more skilful inasmuch as Richelieu, by adopting and softening the violent plea of the Third Estate, substituted the Church as protector of the humble and weak, ousting the Third Estate from the struggle by the help that he brought it. Further, by seeming to associate himself with it, he did not even deign to

THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615

mention it by name. In all his political actions, throughout his life, one finds in him, side by side with an active sympathy towards people who are really suffering, an aristocratic disdain of the merchants, burghers and officials of justice and finance who made up what is termed the Third Estate. Actually, the nation contained a fourth order, undefined and unrepresented, which consisted of the peasants and the poor. In sentiment, in spontaneous zeal and in hope this obscure mass was true to the King, the Church, the nobility. Its real foes were those whom the social hierarchy made its neighbours, the men of the Third Estate; and these also were the element which Richelieu despised.

The satisfaction given by the orator to the inferior order by his warning about royal largesse, was balanced, in relation to the nobility, by standing alongside the latter in opposition to venality in official appointments. 'As poor in money as it was rich in courage,' the nobility thus found itself forbidden access to the responsibilities which it could legitimately claim to exercise; henceforth it was obliged to seek the ecclesiastical benefices, which would normally come to the ordained clergy, and of which the Church found itself in the end deprived. There was thus common cause between nobility and Church, and both orders had to stand shoulder to shoulder in opposition to an abuse from which both suffered equally.

In all that part of his speech devoted to clerical claims, Richelieu insisted forcibly on the need for granting access to ecclesiastics in matters of State. That such a claim accorded with Church interests was beyond doubt; but Richelieu's vigour in expounding this was that of a man who is more or less consciously pleading his own cause. But he was careful to mask as well as possible the

RICHELIEU

rather too personal character of his plea, and to wrap it round in ample draperies of generalised argument. The dignity of the Church, he urged, was debased by the fact that the clergy were kept out of the council, that laymen participating therein were thus enabled to obtain pre-eminence over them, and that too many benefices were granted to men of little faith, and even to enemies of the Church. Now, nothing could more amply strengthen or fortify the established power than the collaboration of eminent Churchmen in governmental councils. In their case, at least, thanks to their celibacy, there was no danger of seeing the rise of those family dynasties who regarded a charge as a fief, and transmitted it from father to son without regard to merit or capacity.

Touching the question of Church jurisdiction and the extension of its domain, he was led to speak of, or at least allude to, the famous article inserted by the Third Estate at the head of their *cahiers* and suppressed after long debate. Its text ran: 'Humbly we beseech His Majesty that it be declared by the States, and passed into fundamental law, that the King holds his Kingdom only from God and his sword, and is subject to no superior temporal power.' The sense of this was only too obvious; it was of clearly Protestant inspiration, and, under a seeming proclamation of the absolute sovereignty of the monarchical principle, it was affirming an implicit condemnation of the Papacy. The question was too grave to be dealt with in a public assembly. Skilfully, but also forcefully, Richelieu confined himself to declaring general principles, according to which the Third Estate (and this clearly referred to the Parliament) should not meddle with questions affecting Church doctrine: 'in so far as the faith and the Church are concerned, only the ecclesiastics must judge. . . . Your Majesty

THE STATES GENERAL OF 1614-1615

will observe with care that all sovereigns are strictly obliged to maintain and preserve the Church in its authority, both by conscience (as is manifest) and by reason of State, since it is very certain that a prince could give his subjects no better lesson in contempt for his power than by tolerating their interference with the power of the Almighty God from whom he derives his own. These words comprise much, and I shall say no more on this.'

Indeed, more explicit terms were not needed. The affirmation was categorical; so far as the Church was concerned, it rejected any interference by the civil powers, and claimed the sole right to establish, if so it seemed fit, a balancing force between Ultramontane claims and the suzerainty of the French monarchy.

As regards Protestantism, all the historians have noticed the tone of equity and moderation adopted by Richelieu in his oration. He gave every appearance of being inclined to moderation and conciliation in every field: 'as for those who, blinded by error, are living peaceably under your authority, we think of them only to long for their conversion and to hasten this by our example, our instruction, our prayers; and these are the only weapons with which we desire to do battle.' It cannot be doubted that this wish for tolerance was spontaneous in Richelieu, and that it was an exact interpretation of his character; but, sincere or not, it was more adroit to use gentleness and to seek to pour oil on the waters of conflict; to alienate the Reformers by sternness or threats meant risking the detachment from the nobility of all those members of it who had taken part in the Protestant movement, and, by the same token, it meant weakening the monarchy. The velvet glove, therefore, was prudent from the political as well as the religious point of view, even although inten-

RICHELIEU

tions were different, and it was as well to await more favourable circumstances before resuming the conflict. The speech concluded with an eloquent and ardent peroration, in which Richelieu besought the young King to keep power in his mother's hand, and exhorted her in turn to accept the burden, to enable France to recover happiness and prosperity.

On Richelieu's instructions, this speech was immediately printed—not, like his previous works, in Poitou, but in Paris. It had been widely praised and admired, and he circulated it widely; he had ordered 'a bale' from his printer. But this was not as yet a programme of government for the country. Richelieu had confined himself to the problems which he had to deal with, and did not, on the whole, go beyond his limits. By his mode of examining the problems, by all the qualities he had been able to display, by his breadth of vision and suppleness, by his grasp of the issues at stake, and his consummate skill in avoiding or cloaking them, he had proved to all that he was a ruler born, and he could leave Paris with the certainty that he would be recalled thither. It is from this point of view, and as regards the progressive stages of his career, that this oration of February, 1615, seems to us of capital importance, and for that reason we have felt it necessary to emphasise it more than is generally done.



MARIE DE MEDICI

From a contemporary portrait

CHAPTER IV

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

AFTER the dissolution of the States General, and the return of the deputies to their provinces, disappointed by failure and with the bitter taste of shattered hopes in their mouths, Richelieu also set off for his bishopric, without lingering in Paris. He did not proceed to the uncongenial climate of Luçon, which he disliked, and where he was at too close quarters with his chapter. He went, as he had done for some years, to live in his priory of Coussay, and there awaited developments. Turning over in his mind the stages of his brief but crowded career, he could by now assure himself that he was approaching his goal. He had left Paris without promises, and without having made any compromising steps. But he knew quite well, as did everybody else, that although the States General had shown their impotence, and had even aggravated the conflicts which they claimed to settle, they had at least revealed the existence of a man—and one man only—who had risen above this confused crowd and drawn upon himself the eyes of all France, and the sympathy of the Queen. He was not afraid lest Marie de Medici might forget him; although she did not lack for servants, and still leaned on the old ministers of Henri iv (the men whom Concini sneered at as 'the dotards'), there was neither sympathy nor trust between them. She kept them provisionally,

RICHELIEU

pending something better, but she chafed under their scolding authority: they were ripe for disgrace.

On the other hand the princes' party showed implacable hostility towards the Regent. Concessions and hints of weakness only heightened their greed. The day was inevitable, and perhaps it would come soon, when the Queen would need a new and sure accession of strength against one side or both, and she could not fail to think of this young Bishop who had so fervently offered her his devotion, and had publicly declared himself on her side, merging the cause of Marie de Medici with that of the French monarchy. Moreover, he kept a powerful support beside her. For there was Leonora Galigai, whom the Queen had made her favourite, whose husband, perhaps, she loved, and who, in this Court of France, reminded her of her Tuscany, spoke her tongue, and quickened within her all the perturbing subtleties of the Italian mind. The favour shown to Leonora Galigai, which she explained herself, with a touch of scornful loftiness, by the formula of 'the rule of a strong soul over a weak,' can be justified by the affection of Marie de Medici for Concini—but there is no proof—or rather by the unconscious craving felt by this Italian woman, exiled in France, to find something of her own country in the Louvre: there we may see the deepest reason for this attachment.

Few people have the strength to support moral solitude. Whatever may have been the faults and twists and pettiness of Marie, she had certainly suffered from feeling misunderstood and scorned by her husband. Leonora, the daughter of her nurse, her chosen companion and shrewd confidante, had a keen and malevolent intelligence, a temper at once supple and wilful, humble and proud, and she was the Queen's unfailing friend, the repository of all

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

her secrets. It may be granted, although no evidence establishes the fact, that the Queen gradually felt attracted by the physical charm of Concini, and became attached to him for his own sake. But before him, and more than him, she loved Leonora Galigai, who, in this strange circle of adventurers, alone represented intelligence, a sense of continuity, and will. We have already seen Richelieu allying himself with Concini by what amounted to an oath of fidelity; but we know also that attachment to the husband by an almost official act had enabled him to win the good graces of the wife, and that he could henceforth count on her. There is no insinuation here that the Bishop of Luçon was her lover: such a romantic hypothesis would be ludicrous. In general, the intimate history of Richelieu is unknown to us, probably for the very simple reason that he gave no place in his existence to love. The malice of contemporaries could never suggest more than vague theories, and his gallantry towards women did not go beyond the bounds of custom at a time when a prelate, to a far greater extent than to-day, behaved in social life very much as a man of the world would do. But towards the favourite we can declare without contradiction that Richelieu never moved from the attitude of a protégé and a respectful friend: a different demeanour would have been stupid and highly dangerous, as it would have roused the instant jealousy of Marie de Medici and perhaps even made a rift between her and Leonora Galigai. The young Bishop was not unaware of the fascination he exercised, and we need only look at his portraits to appreciate it for ourselves: tall, pale, his sharp features accentuated by the cut of beard and moustache, with that sovereign loftiness of attraction, that feverish brightness of his burning eyes, the gaze of which had an expression of profundity, energy,

RICHELIEU

almost of pain, with that slimness of a horseman whom some freak of fate has decked with heavy ecclesiastical ornaments, with that attractive yet perplexing blend of youth and maturity, of courtier and priest, of man of action and man of meditation, he was bound to attract the attention of women, and they were bound to be drawn towards him by an impulse made up of admiration, fear and desire. To rouse desire in someone, but never to satisfy it, is the secret of enchaining that person, if one has the will not to yield to temptation, or the good fortune not to be exposed to it. No other explanation is necessary for the lively sympathy shown to Richelieu; Leonora was a woman, and passionate; he was attractive, and, receiving nothing from him, she could hope for all.

Isolated in the rural silence of his priory, but in touch with the capital through his various correspondents, and even more so by the swift propagation of public rumour, Richelieu followed events attentively, and watched the growth of a turmoil which the States General seemed to have aggravated. These intrigues, rebellions and disturbances, in which every participant was weakened and from which he was fortunate enough to be detached, could only hasten the hour when the central power, thus tottering, would be in need of his energy.

One extremely violent clash, resulting directly from the meeting of the States General, brought Court and Parliament to grips. In order to comply with at least one point of the nobility's claims, the King's commissioners had granted the abolition of the *paulette*, a tax taking its name from the financier Paulet who suggested it to Sully, paid by legal and financial officers to ensure the hereditary tenure of their charges. To abolish this tax meant depriv-

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

ing the treasury of an annual sum of a million and a half *livres*, which would have to be made up for by other means. But primarily, by an oblique method, it meant the abolition of hereditary posts. The Third Estate, which had been so vehement in opposing the waste of public funds for the profit of the nobles, would not hear of its own privileges being touched. The Parlement waxed wroth, and all the law officers, not yet daring direct opposition to the Crown, started a campaign of calumny and invective against the favourites, this Concini and his wife, who were held responsible for all the faults of the Queen. The Bishop of Luçon, reading well the hearts of men, was not surprised to learn that Condé, in this affair, was joining hands with the lawyers, whom he held in scorn. The alliance was political only: Condé's only sincere feelings were his hatred of Marie de Medici, his anger at seeing her in power, the desire that she should succumb under attack; and he was ready to be the friend of any one who attacked the Queen. As soon as the Court had finally dismissed the deputies, many of whom remained obstinately in Paris, the Parlement met and invited the nobles to attend their deliberation, thus, by its own authority, assuming the succession of the States General themselves, and confronting royalty as an independent power. The Queen attempted to wield her authority, and forbade the meeting, but the Parlement ignored the prohibition. Measuring her weakness against the insolence of her foes, she then tried to placate them by postponing the abolition of the tax for three years, but failed to smooth matters by this concession. During May the President and forty of the magistrates came solemnly to address their remonstrance to her, and the President's speech in itself was a new *cahier* of grievances. It included everything, and if actual

RICHELIEU

names were not cited, the allusions were clear beyond any doubt. There were attacks against the entry into the council of persons lately introduced, not for merits and for services rendered to her Majesty, but by the favour of those who wished to have their tools there—a direct attack on Concini; and the Parlement expressed a wish that the provincial governments and the high dignities of the kingdom should be given only to ‘born Frenchmen.’ There were demands for prosecution and expulsion of the infamous sects which, for a few years, had been moving in Court circles—it was implied in the entourage of Leonora Galigai—the magicians, poisoners, anabaptists and Jews. And this bold memorial concluded with the insolent threat of publicly naming the persons alluded to, in the event of the government not yielding to the attacks of the Parlement.

The affair had no results, and could have none. The Parlement could no more upset the Regent than the Regent could dissolve the Parlement. But from this fruitless conflict the royal governance emerged weaker than ever, losing prestige day by day, whereas the arrogance and pretensions of the lawyers were magnified. It is easy to imagine the feelings of a man of Richelieu’s energy and temper when he heard such a story: indignation, scorn, an aristocrat’s fury against these pettifoggers, and an ever-mounting impatience for the summons to show them what the firm hand of a leader can do who is ready to put them in their place.

The nobility, who had gained nothing in this clash, did not admit their defeat. The group of the princes—Mayenne, Bouillon, Longueville and Condé—left Paris with a flourish, as a bed of corruption where they could not possibly live, and went off to foment trouble in the provinces, which they sought to raise against the Regent and the favourites. It

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

was a critical moment, for the time had come when Marie de Medici was to proceed to the frontier and, in accordance with the requirements of the Spanish alliance, embark on the matrimonial general post which would give Elizabeth of France to the Infante, and would make the boy King Louis XIII husband of the Infanta Anne of Austria, daughter of Philip III. The Regent was in no mind to leave the capital, where Condé, the permanent leader of the nobles' faction, might return and stir up trouble. The most prudent course, she thought, would be to take him with her, and she caused a letter to be written to him by Louis XIII, which was a thinly veiled command. Condé paid no more heed to the royal will than the Parlement had done; anarchy was complete, power was bankrupt. He replied that he would not leave until the evils of the State had been remedied and those responsible for them banished from public life. He named them: not only Concini, but also Sillery, the chancellor, the state councillors Dolé and Bouillon, that is to say, the supreme staff of the Regency.

Instantly the King raised an army of 12,000 men, which, commanded by Bois-Dauphin, was to resist all the eventual enterprises of the troops led by the princes, and the Court left for Bordeaux. From Poitiers Louis XIII issued the declaration branding Condé and his partisans as guilty of *lèse-majesté*. Civil war seemed on the point of flaming up, and if it did not do so, the fault was certainly not Condé's. He wanted it, intensely, and he strove to incite a rising of Protestants. But he did not succeed in raising them as a body, and the army under his own command was not strong enough to defeat the royal forces decisively. So in the end nothing came of it but skirmishes, and all the confronted powers—monarchy, nobility and

RICHELIEU

the Parlement—only succeeded in confirming their own impotence.

Amid this general disorder, the Court set out for the Spanish rendezvous, with a powerful escort. On the Bidassoa, near Fuentarabbia, the princesses were exchanged, the tokens of political and sentimental alliance: Louis XIII and his young wife, Anne of Austria, born within a week of each other, were barely fifteen. The marriage was a victory for Marie de Medici, who saw her power confirmed by the success of her policy, and she could rest assured that, with the sovereigns still so young, she could in effect be ruler for years to come. She wished to restore tranquillity at last, in a spirit of peace and harmony, and she cordially welcomed the views of her ministers, Villeroy and Jannin, who likewise desired a working arrangement. On his side, Condé was tired of carrying on this abortive campaign, and was secretly anxious to end it. Long parleys took place at Loudun between the princes and the plenipotentiaries of the King. What Richelieu thought of these intrigues is known to us; he gave his opinion in a contemptuous phrase: 'Everyone was seeking, by emulation in vices, the person to whom he could prostitute his loyalty at the highest price.' He himself felt that his affairs were progressing. When the Court passed through Poitiers on its way to Bordeaux, he naturally went to pay his respects, and learned from Marie de Medici herself that the post of almoner to the young Queen was being kept for him. A singular chance was to help him further, as the Princess Elizabeth, exhausted, and attacked by 'a hæmorrhage,' according to some, by 'the small-pox' according to others, had to halt in the journey at Poitiers. While the Court proceeded on its way, the Bishop of Luçon was left with the future Queen of Spain in his care, and he seized this

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

opportunity with characteristic zeal to write frequently to Marie de Medici, giving her news of the convalescent princess. When he received the official announcement of the dignity conferred on him, which would bring him so close to the royal house, his gratitude found expression in an almost excessive enthusiasm, even if we allow for the adulatory note which was then a customary form of politeness: 'I shall beg your Majesty to believe that, having no words truly worthy of expressing my gratitude for the unmerited honour which it has pleased your Majesty to confer upon me in my absence, spontaneously resisting those who sought to deprive me of the fruit of your promises, I dedicate every action of my life to this end, beseeching God that He may prolong my days in order to lengthen yours, and that, without robbing me of His grace, He may burden me with miseries in order to heap prosperity of all kinds upon your Majesty.' All of which, alas! is sadly heavy, confused and meandering; it is pleasing to imagine that the awkward phrasing of these forced aspirations expressed the uneasiness of a mind which yielded to such grovelling only because it felt obliged to do so, but was the first to suffer from the attitude.

Meanwhile the negotiations between the government and the princes were proceeding at Loudun, not far from where the Bishop of Luçon was living, at Coussay. In these he was not involved, but their webs were woven close about him. He was chafing with impatience and a longing to take part in them. His letters abound in veiled allusions to his hopes and expectations. He writes to his secretary: 'I have had word that there is some question of setting me in the place of a great colossus as cold as marble'—presumably one of 'the dotards'—'and this should be watched at close quarters.' At the same time, and so that

RICHELIEU

his name should be kept always on men's lips, he kept on addressing the secretaries of state with denunciations of the pillaging committed by the troops of Condé in his own castle of Richelieu and throughout his domains. This was a mere pretext, and in it we can feel the fever which was agitating him. What would come out of these interminable parleys? What place would be opened for him in the now inevitable dissolution? He felt that if he was not to risk a lost opportunity, he had best go to Paris, even before the Court returned thither. So there he proceeded during April, to be on the scene of action. The Queen was not due in Paris until May 11, and the King a few days after that.

The Bishop of Luçon, therefore, was no longer near Loudun when peace was concluded there on May 3. He had no concern there, and certainly it was not there that his game would be played out.

Once again, in the pact which set up a pretence of peace between the monarchy and the princes, the Regent had yielded to all of Condé's injunctions. The old ministers, Sillery, Jannin, Villeroy, were set aside. Concini, by a very skilful concession, surrendered the government of the Picardy fortresses. Condé received Berry, the fortress of Bourges, one and a half million *livres* in cash, and the control of the royal council and the signature. He would now become more threatening and still more dangerous. On this occasion Richelieu, who could not know how events would turn, wrote to Condé one of those letters of which we see that he was prodigal whenever he deemed it useful to stake a claim of fidelity and devotion with someone holding at the moment a powerful position: 'I can only testify to the share which I take in the satisfaction which it has pleased the King to obtain for you: I beg you to believe that nobody has been more deeply touched by

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

this than myself, the pleasure which I take in your service not permitting me to yield to anyone the title, which I shall jealously guard throughout my life, of being your most humble servant. . . .' These protestations were utterly false; Richelieu had no love for Condé. But, like a skilled chess-player, he played on two boards. It was, however, on the Queen's that he kept his stronger position, and he was duly rewarded.

In fact, on her return to Paris, Marie de Medici communicated with Richelieu, who had taken up a residence in the Rue des Mauvaises Paroles which he regarded as a permanent one. At first it was as a friend, a counsellor, that the Regent approached him. He had shown her such devotion and fervent loyalty, that she could readily believe him to be disinterested; and he was able enough to let her continue in this belief. Nothing could be detected in him but an ardent servant of the monarchy and the prime royal interests. In these troubled times, the very atmosphere of which was so favourable to his ambition, he appeared to be neither more nor less than an onlooker. The storm was muttering in Paris and at Court. The common people in the capital detested Concini, whose position had been further strengthened by the dismissal of 'the dotards.' The rebellious, and instinctively nationalist, temper of the Parisian crowd could not tolerate this favour. Concini was the Queen's favourite: and no more was required for easily formed suppositions to seem as certainties, and vexatious ones, in the popular mind. Besides, he was a foreigner. His wife was surrounded by Jews, and was reputed to be a witch. Mockery, scorn, anger, hate—these were the general feelings towards this band, in whom they saw a veritable camarilla of bandits and thieves. The Marshal d'Ancre could not show himself in the street

RICHELIEU

without being molested or insulted. After one such brawl he was rash enough to take vengeance, and caused two men in his pay to dispose of a certain cobbler against whom he had a grudge. The affair at once took a serious turn; the hired murderers had to be broken on the wheel in the Place de Grève in order to mollify the popular resentment. Thus, through the weakness which delivered her into the hands of this couple of adventurers, the Queen found herself constantly suspect, and the common people, generally so slow to turn against their sovereigns, began to side against her.

Even within the Court Marie de Medici saw her influence being undermined. For if she was yielding to Concini, the young Louis XIII was surrendering to Luynes; and, although she did not yet perceive the danger, Richelieu, watching the course of events, knew that a conflict between these two favourites, the mother's and the son's, was inevitable. Towards Luynes the Bishop of Luçon took up a very cautious attitude; he could not run the risk of quarrelling with Concini by showing too much cordiality to his rival, but he also felt it necessary to treat Luynes with prudence, in the expectation of some event which would possibly make one or the other victorious. Luynes, a man of ambition under an indolent exterior, might prove formidable. It was through the Concinis, by his servility and apparent insignificance, that he had been able to insinuate himself into the young King's immediate circle. The boy's only passion was for hunting, to which he gave up several days a week; even in his private apartments he kept several small birds of prey which chased other birds down the corridors. Luynes was the trainer and keeper of the falcons, a commonplace squire from Provence, pleasant and smiling, very shabby, and apparently quite detached

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

from everything except what had to do with sport or amusement. Louis XIII, who had never had a friend and had never felt that he was loved, became quite passionately fond of Luynes. He had him appointed governor of the town and castle of Amboise, and could not be parted from him. The insinuating southerner had taken part in the journey to Guyenne, and was even honoured by being chosen to present the homage of the King to his future spouse. On returning to Paris, Louis XIII showed still more affection for him, even more, indeed, than for Anne of Austria. They were constantly closeted together in mysterious confabulations which went on through half the night. The Louvre was perturbed, and the Queen-Mother began to feel concerned. Obviously, such favouritism, in a Court already ruled by one all-powerful favourite, must lead to catastrophe. But what did Luynes expect, or hope for? Had he formed any definite plans? Nobody knew anything. Cordial and modest towards all, affecting total ignorance of political questions, he played the part of insignificance so brilliantly that every one was mystified. This enigma vexed Marie de Medici more than overt hostility. She suspected Luynes of turning Louis XIII against her, but she had no proof; and she felt that he must hate Concini, perhaps even be plotting against him. But here, too, she could not be certain, and she lived in a state of anxiety and indecision which gradually became intolerable. Legally, she could do nothing against Luynes. She had not the courage to cause him to be murdered. So she tried devious means, and that hypocritical form of diplomacy which reveals so clumsily the weakness of those who have recourse to it. There was a pathetic scene, in which she played the tearful role of a resigned mother, when she begged her son to authorise her to leave the Court,

RICHELIEU

renounce the cares of power, and retire to her principality of Mirandola. Her hope was that the young King, in terror of the burden which would fall on himself, would fall into her arms, implore her to remain, and offer the banishment of Luynes as a token of his fondness. But this stroke had been foreseen by an intelligence subtler than her own: Luynes had coached his royal friend with the proper reply—a warm eulogy of Concini and of his administration. To the oblique attacks on his own favourite, Louis XIII replied with assurances of trust and friendliness towards his mother's favourite. This was all that she obtained from the conversation, apart from her maintenance of power, which she had not intended to relinquish. But the position was still obscure and uncertain. The Marshal d'Ancre and the Regent were all-powerful in Paris, but Condé, with his money, his strongholds, his control of the royal council, refused to leave Berry, which was becoming a sort of second seat of the French Court and a second government. On that side the danger was serious. Disappointed in his hopes by the marriage of the King, who might have a son, he was clearly capable of deceit or of violence in order to seize the throne. His movements ought to be kept under watch, and to this end he ought to be lured to Paris. But how was he to be brought there, since he was himself reluctant to come?

It was to the Bishop of Luçon that Marie de Medici entrusted this delicate mission, and this was the first occasion on which he had to play an active role in an affair on which the fate of the monarchy may have depended. It is easy to guess at his real feelings about Condé: an ambitious man of genius, and conscious of his genius, Richelieu considered the power which he dreamed of acquiring only as a function of the royal power; the

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

prestige and authority of royalty must be intact if they were to be worth having when the day came for him to be called to personify them. A bold and rebellious prince of the blood who might enfeeble the monarchy was in his eyes a mere leader of faction, and must be disposed of. But the Bishop was too cautious to fling himself into an open fight. He had been careful to protest his loyal devotion to Condé, and it was as a servant, a prelate, a friend, that he must approach him: in such matters trickery is excusable, and even enforced by the scale of the plan which this conduct alone can realise.

So Richelieu went to Bourges, and intoxicated Condé with promises and protestations, having all the semblance of loyalty beyond suspicion. In moving terms, on the Queen's behalf, he expressed the desire to see the return of the prince who alone could direct the royal council and lend his authority to the Crown's decisions. Everything would be in his hands. The Marshal d'Ancre and his wife assured him that all their influence would be directed to his strengthening; all affairs of state would be entrusted to him, and he would be Regent in fact if not in name.

The vain and mischief-making Condé was easily won over, and, without seeking the advice of his friends, hurried back to Paris to take up the reins of power. Thus Richelieu had triumphed, and in his secret heart he knew that his victory had gone far beyond what Marie de Medici imagined. Condé was returning because he fancied he would hold sovereign powers: the Bishop of Luçon had said what was necessary to convince him. And so, between the government and himself, there was the certainty of an immediate and recalcitrant opposition, with renewed violence, and an inevitable crisis which would have to be solved definitely and with vigour. The return of Condé,

RICHELIEU

which Marie de Medici saw as an assurance of peace and order at the price of a few concessions, was bound to provoke the supreme conflict which Richelieu needed. We need not be surprised that he was so persuasive; if he was in later days to devote his genius to the service of the monarchy, at this moment he was working chiefly for himself, and acting so as to put himself in power.

As soon as Condé was back in Paris, the paradox of the situation was obvious to the most short-sighted. He set out to rule, and all the 'opposition' elements—the dismissed ministers, the Parlement, the people themselves, in a word all the foes of Concini, a nationalist party of the time—welcomed him as their head, as the saviour who would rid France of this clique. 'The Louvre was a solitude; his house was the Louvre of old days. He could not be approached because of the crowd.' Everybody with any business to transact turned to Condé. Vain and insolent, he spent his evenings in feasting, his nights in debauchery, and paraded the arrogance of his sovereignty, believing himself to be truly the master of France. He impudently boasted that 'he had only to lift the King off the throne and sit down on it himself.' It was taken for granted that Concini would be assassinated, and the Marshal d'Ancre and his wife began to tremble, meditating a flight which would at least have saved their lives. The Queen shared their alarm to the full. Hectic, storming, at bay, she asked advice of all and sundry. It was Barbin, the comptroller-general, and Richelieu, who drove home the need for swift and sharp action; the arrest of Condé was now the only remedy, and at once it was decided upon. 'They would not dare!' he said with a shrug when he was told, 'it is too big game!' But Richelieu, still prudently in the background, was not inclined to hesitate. On September 1,

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

1616, when Condé was preparing to attend the council, the Marshal de Themines, with an imposing escort, arrested him, confined him in the Louvre, and then removed him to the Bastille.

At once the startled opposition crumbled and vanished. The crowd of place-seekers and dependents round Condé moved over to the Louvre with the enthusiasm of cowardice. The good folk of Paris, more true to its friends, avenged its reverse by sacking the mansion of the Marshal d'Ancre, but this was the only violence which followed the arrest of Condé. Fundamentally, it came to every one as a relief. There was no longer the dilemma of a choice between two opposing powers, and the struggle had been won by the traditional power, the only one which would have behind it the force of divine right. The Keeper of the Seals, du Vair, a sententious and grumbling old man, was dismissed, and his post was offered to Mangot, thus leaving vacant a secretaryship of state in the council. Richelieu, who only a few days before had been appointed ambassador-extraordinary in Spain, then received the reward of his services. He had reached his goal. Without betraying any gladness or pride, he made a show of accepting his appointment as one of those trusts which a man cannot honourably avoid: 'my own inclination,' he wrote in his *Memoirs*, 'would have made me prefer the continuation of my mission in Spain, which was only temporary. But, apart from the fact that I could not honourably deliberate in a situation where the will of a superior power seemed to me absolute, I admit that few young men would be capable of declining the splendour of a post which promises favour and employment at the same time. I therefore accepted the proposals made to me by the Marshal d'Ancre on the Queen's behalf.'

Richelieu wore an air of resignation in thus assuming

power, like a servant taking on a burdensome task, but actually it represented the triumph of a dream patiently and resolutely pursued, and we have seen the skill, the flattery, the diplomacy, and the sense of intrigue and of human baseness which enabled the Bishop of Luçon to reach his goal. His greatest success was clearly the game he had just played, in winning Condé marks the trump card. Here the Queen and the prince had been unconscious puppets in his hands, one of them blinded by his folly and his turbulent vanity, the other by the prestige of this young prelate, which she could not withstand. Did he reward her for this by granting what her buxom maturity may perhaps have desired? It would be as rash to affirm, as it would be childish to deny, the possibility. Ill-wishers had no doubts; and if she remained prudent, the very fact of her prudence is explained by reasons so strong that no argument can be adduced from them in favour of episcopal virtue. When the Regent and her foster-sister spoke, with a trace of fright and more than a trace of ecstasy, about those looks which could not be resisted, or when Marie de Medici asked the fortune-tellers whether Richelieu had a charm in his possession to make himself loved, she was confessing—as both women did—that it would not have been in their power to refuse him. Did he make use of the desire which he quickened? Did a moment come when he judged it politic to grant positive satisfaction to one or other of these women? The question can doubtless never be answered. But, judging by human standards, it seems probable that, after rising to power through the will of Marie de Medici, he must, if he were to stay there, give her at least a temporary illusion of love: to keep his distance for ever would have been too cruel an insult.

INTRODUCTION TO POWER

The only mistake made by this ambitious man, whose opportunism amounted to genius, was to misread and neglect the feelings of the King. Richelieu, like nearly all his contemporaries, judged Louis XIII by appearances; and outwardly he was heavy, bored, listless. Actually, his nature was restless, anxious and suffering. The King suffered from his shyness, his awkwardness, his stammer. But he was capable of attachments, as his friendship with Luynes showed, and a person who can love can also hate. With attentiveness, with a pretence of esteem, and by simulating seriousness with him, Richelieu could be on good terms with him. But he did not take the trouble to do so, and did not gauge the possible reserve of spite, wounded sensibility, jealousy and distrust in the recesses of a heart which he thought was lifeless. Intoxicated with his triumph, he hardly imagined he would have to reckon with the hostility of this lad, and that when that day came the King would be the stronger. But how could he not have felt the dazzling wonder of his success? In eighteen months, since addressing the States General, he had found himself appointed almoner to the Queen, and a councillor of State; great wealth was not yet his, but at least his difficulties had been eased by the grant of an income of 6,000 *livres*:¹ and before even taking over his functions as ambassador in Spain, he had become Secretary of State. Was there not something almost miraculous in the swiftness of this rise, which reminds us of Ruy Blas? And it is difficult not to feel that here, too, there are signs of a woman's love, the will of a Queen.

His appointment was signed on November 25, 1616.

¹ The figure should be multiplied, say, twenty times, to give an equivalent of purchasing power in the modern franc.

RICHELIEU

His mother had died eleven days before. For three weeks the body rested in the chapel of the family seat, waiting for the Bishop of Luçon to preside at the obsequies. He did not come. Certainly, we have a letter in his hand touching this, in which he expresses due regret; but one feels neither deep emotion nor genuine grief. There was no human tenderness in this soul hungering for power and place. His single passion was always that of the monarchy, because he represented it and wielded its majesty and power. To shed tears he had neither time nor the right.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST MINISTRY

‘THIS new-made Secretary of State is a prelate so renowned for the blamelessness of his life, for his pre-eminence in learning, and for the excellence of his mind, that all who are acquainted with his merit will readily affirm that God has destined him to render great and signal services to their Majesties in the storms of their State.’

In those terms the *Mercure François* hailed the Bishop of Luçon’s advent to the council. Officially he did not sit therein as prime minister, but only as secretary of state for war; but it was generally understood that the pre-eminent place was his in fact. The other secretaries were, so to speak, pushed into the shadows of indifference by his presence and glamour. They were the instruments of power, whereas Richelieu, without having as yet held power, had such prestige of genius and (let it be said) such a masterful power of advertisement, that he stood out as the repository, the personification and the symbol of power.

At this turning in his life, in the intoxication of an appointment which set him at the age of thirty-one in the very heart of government, the young prelate had the feeling that he had fulfilled his destiny; for hitherto the general interests of the monarchy, when he invoked them, were only to him a means of affirming his pre-eminence, and of making it generally recognised that he alone was capable of assuring these interests. Never had a man

RICHELIEU

desired power more fiercely, nor had a more burning thirst for it. It would strip him of all his human qualities to see in Richelieu simply a fanatical and supremely gifted servant of France and of royalty. But it would be a denial of his nobility and heroism to interpret him as an ambitious egoist, aided by fortune, who wielded sovereign power only to satisfy his pride or his greed. The greatness of the man lies in his complexity. How did he reach the brilliant position he now held? He did so because of his merits, no doubt, and because he was able to force a conviction of his own superiority on all, even on his opponents. But by what processes did he attain this? By the same that the basest or the most unscrupulous politician would have used: by spying and plotting, by flattery and servility. He affected humility with those who could help him, veiling his contempt under adulation, and bowed before them to oblige them to raise him up. Did his personality then contain baseness and abjectness, and was his character inferior to his spirit? Was it not rather the remorseless, disdainful cynicism of a psychologist familiar with all the by-ways of the human heart, assuming it as his right to use every weapon, every trick, every deception necessary in the effort to besiege and conquer these selfsame things? Moral concepts have little place in politics. The only criterion of a method's worth in this domain is its efficacy, since the immensity of the interests at stake leave no ideal conceivable except success, by whatever means it be attained. When he cringed before Marie de Medici, or Concini, or Leonora, it was not himself, it was they, whom he despised; they were his unsuspecting tools, the mere human material of his upward advance.

Nevertheless, he committed a grave error of tactics, so grave indeed that it was soon to deprive him of this first

THE FIRST MINISTRY

ministry, so gloriously and quickly gained. In a monarchical regime no man, however outstanding, can exercise real and lasting sovereignty except by a delegation of the royal power; the King, and he alone, by divine right, holds a power before which all his subjects are equal, as before God Himself; and whatever the human worth of the sovereign, however mediocre or limited he may be regarded as, he is still, *qua* monarch and by his oath, the intermediary between God and his subjects. He may be weak, irresolute, stupid, but it is only from him that a minister derives the authority which will enable him in the sovereign's name to bring into play the virtues which are lacking in the man who wears the crown—strength, decisiveness, clear-sightedness. Now, Richelieu did not hold this delegated authority. He said himself that he had accepted the proposals made to him by the Marshal d'Ancre on the Queen's behalf. He recognised, therefore, that he was not the servant of the King, or was so only by a verbal fiction. Actually, he was the representative of a coterie, and really possessed only a portion of the power, the part arrogated to themselves by the Queen and her Italian favourites.

The Court of France at this time presented a singular spectacle. On one side there was the Queen-Mother, an intriguing Italian of inferior intelligence, continually busied with petty calculation, petty devices, petty intrigue, lost in detail and totally lacking in breadth of general conceptions, not so much as aware of the great political problems which passed like clouds above her head, and hardly ever looking beyond the moment; and beside her were the two birds of prey who had likewise crossed the Alps, greedy, cynical, insatiable, driving their beaks and claws deep into the patrimony of France: the male,

RICHELIEU

luxurious, ostentatious, swollen with pride; and the female, dingy, swarthy and even more ferocious. Such was the trio to whom the Bishop of Luçon owed his elevation to power.

On the other side of an unbridgable gulf moved the queer couple of the boy King and his chief fowler. The favourite would have been feared if the monarch had been taken seriously; but the low esteem in which the King was held was the strongest safeguard of his inseparable friend. Luynes stood cloaked in the shadow of Louis XIII, who himself hardly emerged from the obscurity in which he was placed by general contempt.

French history hardly contains a more pathetic and pitiable figure than this crowned boy, crushed beneath the weight of a power out of all proportion to his physical and moral strength, who tried with all his wavering will to stand erect, to grip the unwieldy sceptre, to show at least the soul of a king, although he had neither the noble mien, the strength, the speech nor the talents of such. His fate was all the more tragic as he seems to have been well aware of it, and his inner life was an unceasing battle. It was without the approval of Louis that Richelieu entered the council; according to the protocol, no doubt, everything was done in the King's name, but the Queen was not in the habit of consulting this young scamp of sixteen, and he was content to repeat, or to countersign, such orders as were dictated to him. He could not oppose the nomination of the new councillor of state, and did not even contemplate doing so; but, perturbed by all that he heard of Richelieu's astounding genius, he regarded him as an adversary, since he had joined hands with the group of his foes. The insidious and ever-attentive Luynes added fuel to the fire smouldering in the King's heart. It was he

THE FIRST MINISTRY

who most clearly realised the ambition of Richelieu, because his own was no less grasping, and once he saw Richelieu in power, all his thoughts turned to striking him down. Richelieu apparently was unaware of this hatred, or did not fear it. Certainly he would never have treated Louis XIII with the protective disdain that Concini showed, an upstart swollen by success; but for all his correctness, courtesy and respect, he did not discern that this shy, stammering, timid boy cherished in his heart a pride in his royal status, and was eager, with a tormenting violence, to assume his duty of reigning. He had a surly, despairing envy of this youthful prelate, fifteen years his senior, who, as Bishop, as courtier, as cavalier and swordsman, moved through life with such ease and such an air of smiling domination, in those gatherings where he himself, the King, felt constrained and unhappy. Jealousy, mistrust, grievance, humiliation at seeing himself given a new master—such were the first feelings of Louis XIII towards Richelieu. And never, even in the days of their closest collaboration, was this early lack of confidence to be completely dissipated. From the time of this swift advent to power, Richelieu seems to have reached a realisation of the policy which was to be that of his whole life, and which he at once sought to put into practice: at home, a policy of authority against a rebellious nobility, and abroad, one of national resistance to the imperialism of the house of Austria. These were two aspects of the same attitude, two forms of one intention. To Richelieu the idea of France coincided with the idea of monarchy, and by nature even more than design, he sought to assure the European pre-eminence of this monarchy; this he desired all the more as, from now on, he considered himself as the holder of executive power, and as it was impossible, almost physically

RICHELIEU

impossible, for him to admit even the idea of any resistance to his will. It was in the name of this same ideal of sovereignty that Richelieu was to strike at the nobility within, and struggle against Austria without.

The sudden squall which sent Condé to the Bastille, and replaced the old ministers with young and energetic men, had also given food for thought to many of the factious nobles who were profiting by the troubles of the Regency to share out power and money amongst themselves. But they were not all equally timorous, and some remained recalcitrant, in particular the Dukes of Nevers, Bouillon, Mayenne and Vendôme. These men, far from laying down arms, or immediately after laying them down, showed renewed intentions of fighting. Nevers entrenched himself in Rethel and Mézières, and took possession of Sainte-Menehould. The others stood by him, and put their own strongholds in readiness for siege. Once again these great vassals of the crown, in whom the feudal spirit blazed up at moments of peril, were setting up the aristocracy against the throne. But in January, 1617, by royal declaration registered by the Parlement, they were denounced as criminals guilty of *lèse-majesté*, and on January 18 Richelieu published a manifesto so determined and threatening that the nobles were left quivering with stupefaction and rage.

‘Who does not see,’ he wrote, ‘that the sole means left to his Majesty to prevent these too frequent rebellions in his State is to inflict stern punishment on those who are the instigators? If the previous clemency of his Majesty has only hardened these men, if overlooking their faults serves only to make them overlook their duties, if boons granted have only the result of making them more powerful in wrong-doing and ingratitude is the only return which

THE FIRST MINISTRY

they give; if threats fail to restrain them and they can be brought into the paths of duty by no consideration, and if they persistently show by their actions that their sole purpose is to overcome the authority of his Majesty, to dismember and dissolve his State, to quarter themselves in his kingdom in place of the lawful power and introduce as many separate tyrannies as there are provinces: in this case, his Majesty, touched by the feelings of true fatherhood and animated by the courage of a great King, will be obliged, although regretfully, to chastise these disturbers of his State and punish their rebellion.'

It was no longer a question of simple intimidation; the time for gentleness had passed. Richelieu despatched three armies against the rebels, into Champagne, the Nivernais, and the Ile-de-France. They were headed by the Duc de Guise, Marshal de Montigny, the Comte d'Auvergne, and there was every indication in the strength of these forces that the campaign would not be limited to elegant and noisy skirmishes, but that the new government regarded itself as in a state of war and was really animated by a martial spirit.

Forced to fall back on their territorial forces, the rebels could not resist, although there was a danger that they might bring in troops from Germany. The Protestant countries, indeed, rejoiced in this opportunity of fighting the faction which was pursuing an Ultramontane policy in France—the policy of Marie de Medici and the Concinis, controlled by the Spanish influence and submissive to the will of Rome. The very fact of Richelieu being at the head of the ministry might be viewed as a challenge to the Protestant nations, because, since his declaration to the States General, and in all his relations with foreign ambassadors, he had hitherto played the Spanish cards and

3-242
BAL

RICHELIEU

paraded his Roman loyalties. These things belonged only to the immediate past, and Richelieu had to free himself from that speedily, but without going so far as to eat his own words and betray himself; and thus there began the inevitable paradox of his policy, which would oblige him to fight against the French Protestants in order to safeguard French unity, and to seek support from foreign Protestants against the Catholic house of Austria.

In order to clear up misconceptions, and to open fresh avenues for French foreign policy, Richelieu sent ambassadors into Holland, England, Switzerland and Germany. It was particularly in Germany that action was necessary, to check the recruiting of troops there by the Duc de Bouillon. As the King's representative to the German Princes, Richelieu chose Monsieur de Schomberg. No appointment could have been more sympathetically received. Schomberg was himself a Protestant, and so was foreign to the Italo-Spanish camarilla of the Court; it was no longer from Rome or Madrid that he would receive advice—a veritable revolution in French policy.

The instructions prepared by Richelieu for Schomberg form a document of great interest—as he himself recognised, since he included them in full in his *Memoirs*. A few passages show the main lines of his political principles already laid down:

‘Your first efforts [he wrote] will be directed to making it clear that it is pure calumny, based only on the passion and pretences of our enemies, to say that we are so Roman and so Spanish that we should like to embrace the interests either of Rome or of Spain, to the prejudices of our own former alliances and of ourselves: that is to say, either of those who profess the so-called Reformed religion in France, or of all those others who, hating Spain, make especial claim to be good Frenchmen.’

THE FIRST MINISTRY

To detach France from Spain, to affirm as strongly as possible that a French Protestant was more precious to the State than a Spanish Catholic, to insinuate even, without declaring it overtly, that France was essentially the enemy of Spain in spite of the Spanish marriages, and was naturally drawn towards all the Princes who shared this enmity—these were the basic ideas of these instructions. Some of the sentences have a truly significant vigour:

‘Nobody will believe that a man burns his own house to please his neighbour, and that, in order to love other people, a man will hate and destroy himself. Diverse beliefs do not make diverse States; divided in faith, we remain unified in a prince in whose service no Catholic is so blinded as to think, in matters of State, that a Spaniard is better than a French Huguenot.’

The instructions are not confined to these statements of principle. Schomberg was ordered to indicate to the Protestant Princes the eventuality of an alliance against Spain:

‘Occasion must be taken to show them that we do not at all desire the advancement of Spain, offering, though discreetly, assistance against the moves made by the King of Spain to ensure that, in time, the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia will descend to one of his children.’

Finally, so that the Protestant Princes should not be mistaken about the real meaning of the struggle against the nobility, Richelieu ordered that they should be ‘made to understand that here was no question of religion, but simply of rebellion; that the King wished to treat his subjects equally, irrespective of religion; but that he also desired, as reason required, all parties to hold to their duty.’

This was in itself a programme, and later he would

RICHELIEU

put it into force. What must have astonished the foreign Princes, when Schomberg transmitted to them these instructions, was the character of the policy thus inaugurated by Richelieu, which in modern terms would be described as laic. Richelieu attained power through the conclusive support of a passionately Catholic faction; he occupied a high ecclesiastical office; his renown was in great measure due to his having been the spokesman of the clerical order before the States General—all circumstances which made every nation opposed to Catholicism and Spanish hegemony apprehensive of a policy more than ever Spanish and Catholic in character. But here, abruptly revealed, stood a powerful personality who was French, and nothing but French. More monarchical than French, it might be said. But how could a distinction be drawn between the two ideas, in an age when nobody thought of France independently of the monarchy, when the monarchy was really France? To desire the greatness of the monarch, his sovereignty over a disarmed nobility, his supremacy over other European nations, was equivalent to desiring and affirming the majesty and pre-eminence of France. As regards his king, his country, and himself, Richelieu could not admit of half-measures, partial conquests, divided authorities: the kind of trinity which he felt within his soul could find its due place only on the supreme apex. The majestic weight of sacerdotal vestments hardly hampered him; he was quick to forget them, and free himself of their burden. It now became comprehensible where lay the mainspring of his action: Catholic, certainly; but not only for God, for Rome, for the sanctity or the beauty of religion—Catholic essentially in so far as the triumph of the Church could advance the consolidation of French unity.

THE FIRST MINISTRY

This plan of battle, outlined by the young secretary of State in his instructions to Schomberg, would not be applied for several years yet; for while his ambassador was being welcomed at once with delight and astonishment in the Courts of Germany, and while the rebellious Dukes, beaten and hunted by the royal armies, found themselves cornered and hardly concealed their wish to lay down their arms, a sudden storm in the French Court was about to overturn everything.

Concini's fortune was lavishly, insolently, provocatively displayed. A swaggering adventurer, raised by the weakness and stupidity of a queen to the precincts of the throne, he came at last to regard himself as the legitimate occupant, in virtue of the adage that possession is nine points of the law. And who, indeed, was to dispute his power? Certainly not these ministers, the Barbins and Mangots and Richelieus, who owed their places to him and united in servile protestations. Nor was it that Provençal squire whom the King had made friends with; for on whom would he have had to rely to fulfil his ambitions, if he had any? On Louis XIII? But to Concini Louis was the most null and unreal figure of the whole Court. There was no insult which the Italian upstart did not inflict on the young sovereign, to impress him with his superiority, and to savour it himself: he strutted before him with his hat on his head, declared publicly that he ought to be whipped, sat down on the throne, or refused him the money he needed. The braggart Concini, devoured by insatiable appetites, passionate and ardent, could feel nothing but contempt for this sickly lad, so timid and restricted, only half alive. He did not even regard him as capable of rancour, still less that such resentment might be dangerous. In a word, the only foes he reckoned on were those nobles

RICHELIEU

who, rising against their King, took good care to proclaim that their real enemy was the Marshal d'Ancre, and that they wanted to see the Louvre well rid of him. A heartfelt wish, certainly. But these same Dukes were nonplussed: Rethel was taken, Soissons was on the point of surrender, and the rising would soon end with the collapse and submission of the rebels. This meant a conclusive victory for Concini. With good fortifications at Quillebeuf, which was his, with a fortress from which he dominated Rouen, with the governments of Meulan, Pontoise and Corbeil, he would give himself a fief from which he could not be dislodged if he had ever to take refuge therein; he would assume the great feudal title of Constable—and he would be the ruler!

The whole Court divined this dream of Concini's pride, anticipated and dreaded its realisation. Lassitude was widespread. This tyranny of pickpockets, this enslavement of the French crown by a couple of transalpine adventurers, obsessed and revolted the general conscience. There were murmurings. Men whispered that an end must be made; but nobody took action. The moment, however, was decisive: if the Dukes were reduced to impotence, there could be no further barrier against the Florentine. Somebody must take the initiative. But who was it to be?

The Court was living in such an atmosphere of irritation and anxiety that the inevitable climax in the drama seemed imminent. Richelieu was among the first to feel it, and to realise that he must, for the sake of his future, break away from his compromising allies. They had procured his elevation, but there was now a risk that they might drag him down into ruin. He knew, as we have seen, how to slip free from his bonds, and a *volte-face* did

THE FIRST MINISTRY

not alarm him: it would suffice to justify the turn-about. Feigning fatigue, but not concealing his anxiety over Concini's policy or his fears regarding its outcome, Richelieu proceeded to beg the Queen for leave to abandon his ministry. He declared his discouragement, urging that he felt unable to be any longer associated with actions menacing to the monarchy, and that he was desirous of repose and relaxation, even of obscurity, in the peaceful silence of some archbishopric: his sole ambition, he confessed, was to attain to the Cardinal's purple.

Thus, with supreme skill, he detached himself from his protectors. It was high time.

Whilst the Court was hesitating in expectancy, uncertain which road to take, the decision was being made in a direction whence Concini never supposed it would come. Louis XIII, with Luynes, who was doubtless the confident instigator, had resolved on a bold stroke. Their secret was well kept; they were used to keeping each other's counsel, and their powers of silence, dissimulation and deception were really astonishing.

The affair was vigorously carried through. Only on one point did the King and Luynes differ: Louis XIII, timid and scrupulous, or perhaps too human, would have liked things to stop at an arrest, but Luynes, more energetic and shrewd, wanted assassination. On his orders, the Baron de Vitry suddenly arrested the Marshal in the courtyard of the Louvre, in the morning of April 24; and when Concini made a gesture of surprise and resistance, Vitry's men shot him down with pistols, shattering his face, whilst other hired ruffians ran their swords through his body. Vitry stretched him full length on the ground with the toe of his boot, and a shout of 'Long live the King!' went up to show everybody whence the order had

THE FIRST MINISTRY

sincere fidelity; and when the day came he had the reward of his foresight and his shrewd duplicity. This is how he narrates the episode:

‘When I entered the gallery of the Louvre the King was mounted on a billiard-table in order to be better seen by everybody. Calling me, he told me that I had not shared the evil counsels of the Marshal d’Ancre, and that I had always loved him (he used these words) and stood by him on the occasions which had arisen, in consideration of which he wished to treat me well. Monsieur de Luynes, beside him, also spoke, telling the King that he knew how I had several times urged the Queen to allow me to lay down my functions, and that I had more than once quarrelled with the Marshal on matters particularly affecting his Majesty. He then warmly protested his friendship to myself. I replied to what he had been pleased to say thus publicly, that he would never be mistaken as regards his good opinion of me, that I would die rather than ever fail in his service; that I owned having shown in my simplicity a lack of prudence regarding the Marshal d’Ancre and much lack of consideration, but owed it as a duty to truth to say now that I had never known of his ill-will against the person of his Majesty, nor of any design directly opposed to his service; that it was true that I had frequently pressed the Queen to let me retire, not because of any ill-treatment at the hands of one who had indeed shown me kindness, but because of the behaviour of the Marshal, his endless suspicion of those who approached him, and the bad impressions which I feared he would give of me to the Queen. . . . After this I stepped over to Monsieur de Luynes, thanked him for his good offices on my behalf to the King, and assured him of my affection and service.’

This full quotation is a narrative full of historical and psychological importance. The speech, so carefully balanced and calculated, is a miracle of Jesuitry, in the

RICHELIEU

bad sense of the term. How skilfully does Richelieu, 'in his simplicity,' give the impression of his good faith, his ignorance, his instinctive dislike of Concini, his lack of trust in the favourite, and also of his equity, his serenity, his spirit of generosity and forgiveness! He places himself above and beyond the battle. He is well aware that in this storm he will not be able to retain his portfolio, as the reaction will probably restore the 'dotards' whom he had driven out; but he is content to be only temporarily off the stage, and not to be disgraced. Louis XIII did in fact recall the old ministers expelled by Concini, but Richelieu, if he found himself for a time kept out of power, came through the hurricane with heightened prestige; he seemed even stronger and greater than had been imagined.

It was he who acted as mediator between Marie de Medici and Louis XIII, and he was able so far to modify the terms of exile imposed on her as to enable her to go to Blois. She left on May 3, followed by Richelieu, whom she had appointed as chief of her council. His term of office had been brief and inconclusive. But the retirement was not a collapse. The Bishop of Luçon left Paris, knowing well that the day of his return would come, that then nobody would dispute his power, and that the irresistible combination of circumstances would carry him to final supremacy.

CHAPTER VI

VIGIL OF ARMS

THE reign of Luynes was to prove neither more glorious nor advantageous for France than that of Concini, although there was less degradation and cynical cupidity. As Bouillon had brutally declared: 'It is still the same tavern; only the sign is different.' In fact, the policy of the favourite who wielded the usurped power of the King had neither originality, nor personal consideration, nor solid purpose. Looking at the situation from above, we have a sharp impression that after the crisis which had lately dispersed a faction, there remained in France only two men who were in a position to claim supreme authority: Luynes, because he had the King's friendship, and held the King's delegated power; and Richelieu, because his genius was recognised, and because, vaguely but universally, it was felt that he was the necessary and predestined minister.

But seven years still separated him from the day when he would be summoned to govern France; seven years during which his ideas would still be maturing in study, meditation and observation of life; seven years which would obliterate the lingering impatience and rashness of youth, and leave him with that incomparable self-mastery which later would leave men doubting his heart and humanity; seven years, in fine, during which, far from the Court and apparently unaware of its intrigues, he never

RICHELIEU

ceased to grow greater and to impose the weight of his presence on men's minds. These years of waiting, it may even be said, were those in which Richelieu became truly worthy of his destiny.

Certain sentences in the *Memoirs* disclose for us the hidden thoughts of the Bishop of Luçon at the time of his departure from Paris to accompany Marie de Medici to Blois. We should not emphasise them in these pages if our object were to trace the general history of France during this period; but our concern is with the personality of Richelieu, and, above all the events, it is the man whom we seek to understand. We cannot therefore overlook any details which may enable us to penetrate the complexity of this personality, in which such mutually exclusive traits seemed to be united, the quality of detail and the quality of synthesis, great concepts of politics and minute precautions of intrigue, pride and humility, frankness when it seemed necessary and falseness when it was useful.

'I know well,' he writes, 'how thorny a charge it was to remain with the Queen, but it was my hope to behave with such candour and sincerity as to disperse all the clouds of malice conjured up against me.' And a little later he adds: 'I did fail, on our arrival at Blois, when I communicated with Monsieur de Luynes, to tell him that I could say with certainty that he need have no apprehensions regarding her.' Nor should we forget these few but pregnant words: 'From time to time I gave him an exact account of the Queen's actions.'

From which we can see what Richelieu's true role was: he had been placed beside Marie de Medici by the King and Luynes in order to spy on her and control her. That

VIGIL OF ARMS

he did so conscientiously we know from his own words. If the situation changed—as in fact it speedily did—it was because of the impossibility of remaining long in such an equivocal position, and of being associated both with Luynes and with Marie de Medici. The Queen compromised Richelieu because, not doubting his sincerity, she joined his name with all her own recriminations, complaints, revolts and threats. This was enough to perturb Luynes, who began to feel he might have made a mistake in giving the Queen a confidant of this sort in her banishment; he could not be sure of Richelieu. And Richelieu was very quick to perceive the delicacy of his position, the advantages of which he had often envisaged, and he could see that in reality it implied very considerable dangers as well. Accordingly, when his brother, having heard something said by Luynes, wrote to tell the Bishop that there was a likelihood of his being sent back to Luçon, Richelieu showed every eagerness to leave Marie de Medici and Blois to make a retreat in his priory of Coussay.

On June 15 he received from Louis XIII a letter in which the King congratulated him on his resolve, and kept him until further orders in his bishopric.

Meanwhile Marie de Medici was storming and wailing. The frenzy of the letter-writing shows the pitch of her fury; she sent letter after letter to the King, to Luynes, to Richelieu, to all her friends. They were mere explosions of wrath, but a blind wrath, for the hapless woman knew not where to lay the blame. The departure of Richelieu deprived her of her only firm support, the only intelligence on which she could count, and the only man who gave any sovereign dignity to her little Court. But had he

RICHELIEU

really been snatched from her? Did he not seem strangely acquiescent in his exile? Why did he refuse to associate himself with her numerous overtures towards obtaining his recall? Why did he not even reply to the letters she sent him? There were moments of doubt and exasperation when Marie de Medici wondered which she hated most, Luynes or Richelieu, and which had been the worst traitor. Richelieu, at Luçon, paid small heed to her fury. He knew that the Queen was impressionable and versatile, and violent in the way of the highly emotional, weak, too, in her irascibility. He did not think there was any need to feel anxious; when circumstances allowed him, or if it seemed advisable to take her side, he would stand beside her again. Meanwhile she could be left to wear out her strength in crying her anger and bitterness.

So now Richelieu was again immured in the solitude of his hermitages, sometimes at Coussay, sometimes at Luçon, for a period which he could not measure and which must often have seemed very lengthy. The impression he tried to give of himself—as his correspondence shows—was that of a sage in happy retirement from political storm and human pettiness, devoting all his energies to the sacred tasks of his episcopate and the battle against heresy:

‘I live in my diocese amid the contentment of my books and the activities of my duties. . . . I am resolved to let time go gently past, here amidst my books and neighbours. . . . I am reduced to a small hermitage amongst my books. . . . I have lived at home amongst my books. . . .’ Such is the reiterated theme, which is decidedly not fortuitous, a gesture of renunciation, an open rejection of all that is living, actual, exciting, a whole-hearted plunge into the realities of other days, into things that are written,

VIGIL OF ARMS

into the past. We should be very ingenuous to be deceived by this specious self-portrait; for there are other letters addressed to Luynes and to the King which show, on the contrary, that his most constant desire is not to be forgotten, not to let himself be slandered by his enemies in his absence, and to proclaim repeatedly his devotion and loyalty. He does not stop at writing directly, but has recourse also to intermediaries, those whom he thinks he can trust; and it is here that we see him in direct written communication with Father Joseph.

The sympathy which linked these two men, since those already far-off days when the young prelate started on his episcopal career, had undergone rather a lengthy eclipse—for over eighteen months, says Richelieu himself. We do not know exactly the cause of this cooling off. It may be explained simply by the constant journeys undertaken by Father Joseph, who had spent some time in Italy in an attempt to stir up feeling in favour of a crusade against the Turks. This veteran of the siege of Amiens, who had changed the coat of mail for the Franciscan's habit, still had a most warlike temper, but his angers were directed chiefly against the enemies of God. An excellent preacher, well aware that the spoken word is a strong sword, he had been appointed Provincial of Touraine, and he founded monastic houses very much as a governor might establish fortresses and garrison them. Did he not boast of having, with his tonsured troops, brought back more than fifty thousand persons to the faith? Unfortunately he had not been able to revive the spirit of Peter the Hermit, and failed to rouse Europe against the Infidels. After preaching the Holy War in Italy and Spain, he returned, angered by his failure, and found his sole means of vengeance in composing Virgilian hexameters against the Mussulmans

RICHELIEU

in a poem, the *Turciade*. But the troubles of France were to offer a new channel for his activity.

Immediately on his return he resumed his occult and powerful position at Court. He proposed nothing less than a reconciliation between Marie de Medici and Louis XIII, and wrote about this to the Cardinal Borghese—a simple fact which gives the measure of his influence. It was recognised by all the courtiers, who were jealous of Father Joseph's authority, which they could in no way escape. Leonora Galigai's phrase, 'the ascendancy of a strong mind,' could also apply to him. Richelieu had realised that he could use this ascendancy as a weapon of his own, if he allied himself with the capuchin. No doubt there was an old medieval prejudice attached to the brown robes of the monks, especially to the humblest amongst them, these barefooted Franciscans, whose long beards made men feel uncomfortable and about whom there were so many popular tales of gluttony and libidinousness. Certainly there were no suspicions of Father Joseph's morals, and he belonged to an excellent Angevin family, but men smiled at his costume and his shaggy appearance, all the more because he had the misfortune to be red-haired. There was little thought, however, of setting up barriers against him, because he did not show any personal ambition. Clearly he wished to play a leading part, but it was for the victory of beliefs, of ideas, of principles: he did not lay claim to anyone's place, and that was his greatest strength. Besides, for all the smiling at the anachronistic intrusion of his rough rustic dress in the grace and elegance of the Louvre, he was respected for his brains, feared for his fanaticism, honoured for his selflessness. It was believed that his sly but infallible eye could penetrate the deepest secrets in men's hearts, and there was hardly any doubt as

VIGIL OF ARMS

to his sincerity of mind. Here was just the instrument, the confidant, the friend, whom Richelieu needed, a man who had access to everybody, with no scruples regarding men since he worked only for the glory of God, seeking nothing for himself, except perhaps the purple, which in any case it was easy to promise him.

With deferential and sorrowful cordiality the Bishop wrote to the monk, placing himself frankly under his tutelage. He insisted, aiming at what he knew would touch Father Joseph, on the depth and fervour of his religious feelings, his passionate desire to devote his life to the triumph of the faith, and emphasised his detestation of the Protestant reformers, who were avenging themselves by incessant calumny and by the rumours of disgrace, hurtful to himself, which they circulated about him.

He expected no immediate effect from this letter. It was intended simply to renew for the future a link which had slipped, and if we emphasise it, the reason is because it marks an important stage in the alliance which was to unite the two men later.

By veiled moves, by murmured advice in corners, the capuchin would revive a desire at Court for his return; meanwhile, Richelieu abruptly turned attention to himself by a sudden action which made him take the lead in a polemical struggle which had set the Jesuits and the Protestant ministers at grips. In three months of feverish work he wrote and had printed a compact volume, which was not only a reply, but a powerful and dogmatic statement of all the articles of the Catholic faith in the problems at issue in the controversy. From a religious point of view this book, the *Principal Points of the Faith of the Catholic Church Defended against the Matters addressed to the King by the Four Ministers of Charenton*, is the work of an outstanding

RICHELIEU

theologian: but from a political point of view it is even more admirable, by its moderation of tone, its equity, and even the generosity displayed by Richelieu towards his adversaries. He stands out here as he was always to do later, preferring reconciliation to anathema, whenever the former is possible, and, in this case, never pronouncing a condemnation of principle: an opportunist, in fact, in so far as he believes that opportunities will help him to triumph, but implacable in resolves if his adversary refuses to be convinced.

The renown lent to Richelieu's name by this work, and the increased esteem which he gained by it, left the Duc de Luynes somewhat apprehensive. With some skill the favourite took advantage of a fresh intrigue, clumsily built up by Marie de Medici, and feigned to believe that the Bishop of Luçon was involved therein; and in April, 1618, he caused the King to ordain his banishment to Avignon, far enough from the Court to be less formidable.

This exile to foreign soil—Avignon belonged to the Pope—lasted barely a year, and Richelieu devoted the time to study, to the elaboration of works of apologetics, and the administration of his see by correspondence. On March 7, 1619, a horseman from Paris brought him an order of recall, and it was a significant coincidence that the messenger was a brother of Father Joseph. The reason for this dramatic reversal of policy is easily discovered. The Queen-Mother, deprived of Richelieu's presence and counsel, had engaged upon a folly which might well have kindled a fresh civil war. As the outcome of a series of plots and adventures which make up the most exciting and richly packed of all heroicomic novels, she fled one moonless night, leaving the château of Blois by a window, and joined the Duc d'Epemon. If this noble took

VIGIL OF ARMS

up a rebel stand, it meant once again the whole of the nobility rising against the King, but this time with the Queen-Mother's support. There was a hurried attempt at compromise, and in the general confusion all Richelieu's friends, Father Joseph leading, joined in a chorus that his presence with Marie de Medici was indispensable, and that only he could make her listen to reason.

On the very next day Richelieu set off, and, after a fortnight of difficult travel, reached Angoulême, where she was in residence. She welcomed him as a saviour: this formidable intrigue, so patiently woven by the Duc d'Epéron, ended merely in restoring the Bishop of Luçon to the foreground of the picture.

And so, once more, the Queen was confronted by this man whose regard held such a deep fascination for her. With anyone else Marie de Medici was sour, violent, erratic, and in constant mistrust and revolt. In Richelieu's presence she yielded to the dominance of his will, with a gentleness in which some sensual element must have entered. She had the sense of being mastered and possessed, and ideally she gave herself to him, with all her coarseness of flesh, all her confusion of mind.

Richelieu was then at one of the decisive turning-points of his career. The whole future of his public life depended on his success or his failure. If Louis XIII and Luynes, despite their anxieties, thus placed him again, after a year, at the Queen's side, it was obviously not in order that he might help her to play her hand, but in order to play theirs. The situation was more threatening than it seemed at first sight. The Queen had the support of the Duc d'Epéron, who had rescued her from Blois after a picaresque journey, and had offered her magnificent hos-

RICHELIEU

pitality at Angoulême. Now, if the King was the first gentleman in France, Epemon was the second, and the Court of Angoulême now shone with a lustre hardly inferior to the Louvre. The alliance with the Duc d'Epemon involved support from all the powerful nobles. Indeed, the strength of this faction meant a danger of attracting to itself the additional strength of the Protestants, in France and abroad; and Richelieu found himself with a mission which was all the more delicate because the King counted on him, and because the King's enemies, with the Queen at their head, fully intended to annex him for themselves, and to add this trump card to their own hand.

With fine courtesy, but a lofty smile on his lips as well, Richelieu feigned complete and contemptuous indifference towards all the previous resolves of the conspirators, ironically refusing to be involved in a plot which he pretended that he could not take seriously. He immediately made it clear that he would not be interfered with. At the first sight of him Marie de Medici lost her grip. The Bishop dictated her wishes. She agreed, almost in a dream, with a sort of swooning pleasure. In a few days, to the general stupefaction, peace was concluded. The swarm of Italian intriguers round the Queen, who anticipated troubles which would enable them to fill their pockets, fled. The Duc d'Epemon, with chivalrous good grace, acknowledged defeat, and wrote personally to the Bishop to compliment him. There was a chorus of praise at the French Court and throughout the country. Those who were not yet convinced of Richelieu's pre-eminence, or who wilfully denied it, changed their tune. He had no more adversaries, because it was felt that he could have no rivals.

By the Treaty of Angoulême, signed on April 30, 1619,

VIGIL OF ARMS

the terms of reconciliation were settled: they were obviously provisional, for, so long as one man did not wield complete power and did not impose his authority on the whole Court and the whole country, there would be two confronting and irreconcilable parties.

This treaty restored to Marie de Medici the right of freely allotting the posts of her household, gave her freedom to choose her place of residence, and granted her the governance of Anjou, with Ponts de Cé, Chinon, and the château of Angers. It was also agreed that Richelieu should be rewarded with a cardinal's hat. Six months later the King and Queen spent a fortnight together at Tours, with every sign of affection, before returning to life in their separate Courts, he in Paris, she at Angers.

But here we find Luynes suddenly showing a veritable frenzy of domination and self-aggrandisement—a human extravagance, justified by the circumstances. The favourite could not lightly support this vague, but very perceptible, menace of Richelieu's triumph. He saw only one way of escaping it: he must so augment his power and fortune that no obstacle could possibly be set against him. Relentlessly and continuously, as never before, he appropriated, or secured for his brothers and cousins and distant kinsmen, a sudden flood of titles, benefices, duchies, peerages, governorships. The spectacle horrified the princes of the blood and all the nobility: what would be their share of the cake, if the favourite shared it all, to the last crumb, amongst those of his little tribe? As Concini before him, he now solicited the title of Constable. Outraged in their interest and their pride, the great men of the kingdom again took up arms against this insolent favourite, and once again the Queen took a hand. There was a ridiculous fight at Ponts de Cé, where the royal army brushed aside

RICHELIEU

the arrogant, elegant, undisciplined forces of the nobles. Again Richelieu made peace between the Queen and the King; and to the latter the Protestants of Béarn were causing trouble. For while the princes, intent on their own concerns, were plotting and fuming, a real religious war had broken out in the south-west. The Treaty of Angers gave to the Queen-Mother all she could desire, repeating and confirming the terms of Angoulême; the promise of the hat to Richelieu was renewed, and, to hasten its granting, Louis XIII despatched a special emissary to Rome. Wearing the purple, raised to princely rank, the Bishop of Luçon would see the glamour of his genius, which was now undisputed, strengthened by those outward signs of greatness and majesty which have no less an influence on men's minds.

The delay between the promise of the hat and its reception by Richelieu, and the still longer time that had to elapse before his advent to power, constitute a period of waiting and of restless intrigue. Richelieu had now only a narrow ford to cross, but he needed the purple. A pledge had been given that he should have it, and the pledge was not yet honoured. What was happening? He realised only too well that Luynes was playing with him. Indeed we know, from the letters of Bentivoglio, the Papal nuncio, that whilst the government officially requested the cap for the Bishop, they were unofficially letting it be known that they did not wish it to be granted. Here Luynes' hypocrisy was so skilful that to some extent it deceived even Richelieu. When he came to realise, with evidence, the favourite's double game, he showed no bitterness, nor even surprise. Sooner or later, victory would be his.

Luynes was not big enough to cope with the terrible

VIGIL OF ARMS

difficulties of the time. There were the Protestants, there were the problems of Germany, there was the imbroglio of the Valtellina, a whole series of confusions and dangers which will be set forth in the next chapter. Richelieu could count on the unhappy minister being in the end overwhelmed, and soon giving ample evidence of his mediocrity. On his side the Bishop of Luçon had Marie de Medici, whose quarrelsome temperament was again finding vent in passionate complaints and indignant demands.

A new crisis of opposition was taking shape, ranging all the malcontents against Luynes, with the Queen openly at their head, and Richelieu in the background, ironic and formidable. During this interval, amidst all these Court intrigues which might at last have infuriated him into some rash violence, Richelieu was supported, and even guided, by the deeply attentive friendship of Father Joseph. This heroic capuchin, at once so shrewd and so visionary, was in need of a great cause to champion. During his earlier years he had dreamed of raising the whole of the Christian West against the Infidel. The failure of his attempts had not checked him: he had found another task, less dazzling perhaps, but no less decisive.

No man was ever less attached to the pomps of power and its tangible satisfactions: to Father Joseph the important thing was the greatness of the cause to which he devoted himself, and the triumph of that cause. But he was not inclined to let his role, his power, his mastery over men and events, be known. On the contrary, he preferred to act in the shadows, secretly, without gaining any personal advantage: and so there was less distrust of him, and his activities were all the better ensured of success.

And so he had found his path: he would be the coun-

RICHELIEU

sellor, confidant, spy and protector of the man whose outstanding genius destined him to control European policy, and to battle against an enemy more dangerous even than the Turk, against the Protestant. To Father Joseph this was the spirit of the crusade in another form, less romantic in appearance, but more immediate and practical in its range.

Did he need an unusual streak of pride to imagine that Richelieu needed him? It was no sign of pride on his part, but the plain, clear realisation of a necessity. Father Joseph knew the human soul, and realised how intolerable is solitude, enveloping the spirit in shadows, uncertainties, anguish. No man is sufficient unto himself; some lean upon friendship, others upon love; the weaknesses of great men, often so strange, are expressions of this vital need to feel united with another creature, disarmed before him, with face bare and the soul laid naked. And in public life, where a man must pick his way through jealousies, hatreds, calumnies, forced to defend himself when he is already burdened with the defence of a world, there is a great sense of security in having beside one a faithful shadow, a comrade ever on the watch, who can see whence an attack may come, and turn it aside or return it. . . .

In duelling, gentlemen summoned the aid of seconds; throughout his life Richelieu was to have Father Joseph as his second. '*Ezechieli!*' the minister said to him, smiling in his prophetic beard. '*Ezechieli! Tenebroso . . . cavernoso . . .*'

Father Joseph was one of the few men with whom Richelieu was simply a man, free, smiling, amusing himself. His contemporaries for the most part misunderstood the capuchin's personality: perhaps it was impossible for courtiers to conceive of a disinterested soul. Flying in the face of probability, they attributed to him the most

VIGIL OF ARMS

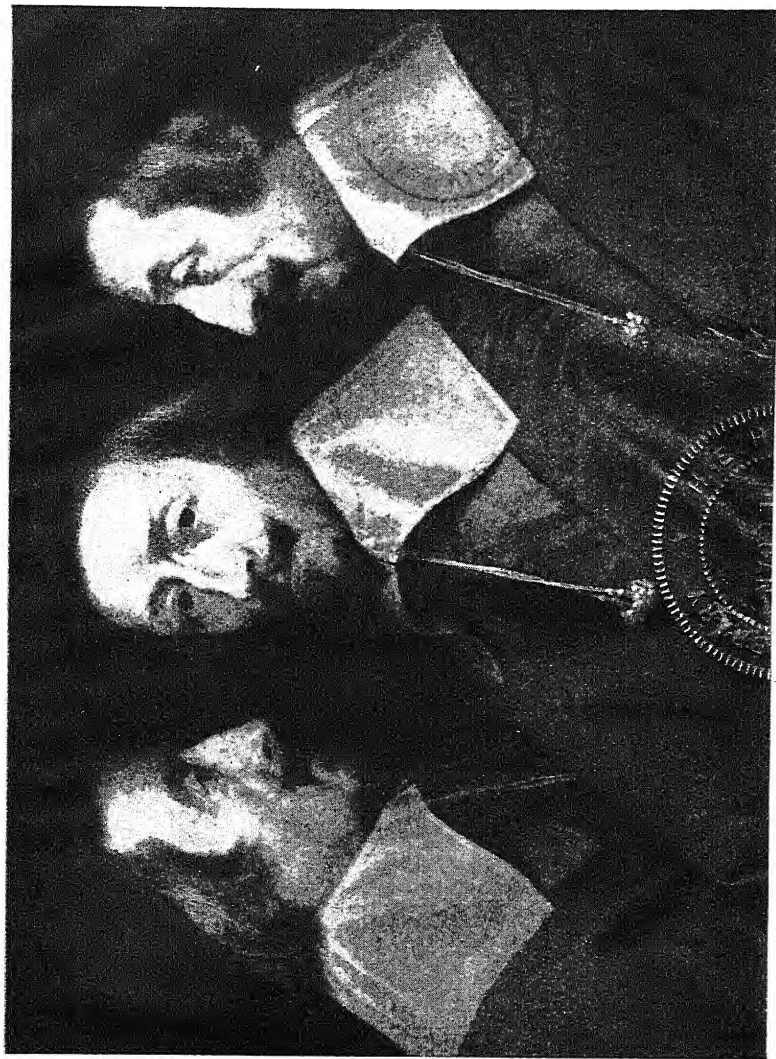
self-seeking designs. Mathieu de Morgues wrote of him: 'The worthy Father is bursting with ambition in a penitential sackcloth; he seeks to attach to himself the highest offices of the Church with a stout cord, and under a rough hood he hides his longing for a scarlet hat. . . .' It is highly unlikely: if Father Joseph had desired only benefices and dignities, if he had really ambitions, his birth and talents were amply sufficient to bring him to episcopal rank, or to the purple, by paths less tortuous and more certain. His real desires were not so commonplace, and far outstripped what his enemies were capable of imagining. He wished to help, with all his strength, the triumph of the man who seemed to him, in the direction of his own ideal, the greatest.

On December 15, 1621, Luynes suddenly died, in the course of his difficult campaign against the Protestants in the south; and chance seemed to be declaring favour towards Richelieu, who, being now rid of this surly foe, at last received the cardinal's hat, at the first vacancy, on September 5, 1622. He welcomed his impressive dignity with a simplicity and ease which showed that such an honour did not increase his stature, and that, at the age of thirty-seven, he was simply receiving what he had long deserved. He did not even make the customary journey to Rome, not considering that he could ever sit in the conclave: the scarlet robe could not bring him to participate in a confraternity, however eminent and exclusive. His sole interest was to consecrate it, as it were officially, in the eyes and thoughts of all who attach value to titles and insignia; the scarlet was the costume of the chief minister, when that minister was a prelate, but it was also the commander's cloak of the ancient generals, and Cæsar wore it

RICHELIEU

over his breastplate: it suited soldier as well as priest. But the new Cardinal did not at once overcome the suspicions and grudge of Louis XIII. 'Here,' said the King, 'is a man who wishes to be one of my council, but I cannot reconcile myself to that after all he has done against me. . . .' Under the rule of Concini, Louis had suffered too much for him ever to forget, and Richelieu, as the Marshal's man, was in his eyes indelibly branded. The young King would have been overjoyed to dispense with his services—if he could! He tried. After the death of Luynes he ruled with his old servants, with his mother, with Condé, the Brûlarts, Sillery, La Vieuville. The multiplicity of successive influences to which he delivered himself were a measure of his confusion of mind, and at the same time of his perception: he turned from one to another because, when tried, each was found wanting. But the circumstances meanwhile were grave: France had never faced a more troubled or menacing Europe. A final decision was called for—at last! On April 29, 1624, after endless vacillations, Louis XIII resigned himself to half-opening the door to the Cardinal, and granted him a seat on the council, with all sorts of restrictions and checks. In barely four months Richelieu held such authority that, on August 13, La Vieuville was arrested and sent to the château of Amboise: his control of the treasury was abolished and Richelieu became chief minister of the council.

The King, with an acquiescence not devoid of heroism, consented to hold out a hand to him, and to make him participate in the majesty with which divine right had invested him, so that he could legitimately exercise the sovereign power. It was to Richelieu, henceforward, that the governance of France would belong.



STUDIES FOR THE PORTRAIT OF RICHELIEU

By *Philippe de Champaigne*

CHAPTER VII

THE CHIEF MINISTER

THE superb portrait-study by Philippe de Champaigne, that triple sketch so scrupulously prepared as a preparation for the great portrait now in the Louvre, gives us an image of the Cardinal so complete and intense that we feel an actual presence. The face is narrow, the cheeks thin and drawn in, under a wide and fairly high forehead, slightly hollowed towards the temples. The wide-open brown eyes droop slightly on the outer side, the right more than the left, an imperceptible asymmetry which marks the sickly character of this brooding, almost painful, face. For that is the most striking feature of the mask: its expression is one of a man turned in upon himself, his gaze directed inward, caustically detached from his surroundings and the agitations around him. Not, however, distracted, but rather abstracted, finding his universe within himself. In profile, the falling line of the eye, accentuated sharply by the shape of the eyelid, gives an impression of fatigue and weariness. But the long, narrow nose, abruptly arched, gives it all a character of power and peremptory nobility, still more emphasised by the upturned moustaches and the short pointed beard, above which run the lines of the fine, tight lips, with a slightly disdainful expression. The right-hand profile is more elegant and kindly, the left-hand one sterner and more grave; the face in three-quarters is chiefly noticeable for the profound impassivity

RICHELIEU

of the gaze. Tall, and with a figure so thin that he looked even taller, with the nervous sensitiveness of hands which Philippe de Champaigne delighted to portray in all their quivering vitality, the Cardinal impressed everybody by a highly complex prestige; he dominated, and that weighty gaze, laden with thought, bore down on other men, disarming them, enslaving them. 'I give you my word,' wrote Malherbe, 'there is something more than human in that man, and that if our vessel is ever to outride the storm it will be while that glorious hand holds the rudder.'

Such words convey the sense of that dominance, that human magnetism, which none could escape, and the mysterious fascination of which was fearfully admitted by Marie de Medici and her confidante. All of us, even the strongest, are so well aware of our real weakness, that the splendour of a truly great mind, superior to the common measure, fills us with an astonishment in which there are elements of fear and admiration. Let one or the other predominate, and we experience love or hate, a hate which is the most conspicuous token of our inferiority. Examine the state of mind of those who approached Richelieu, and these traits will be recognised. His thinness, his pallor, the flash of his glance, the sometimes painful look of the features lined by ceaseless physical suffering, all these stigmata of bodily weakness enhanced the impression of heroic quality that one received from him; it was known that from childhood this frail edifice had been struck and burnt by relentless periodic fevers, that his head and temples were battered by frequent headaches, that irritations and tumours, perhaps a fistula, prevented him from sitting down, sometimes for days on end, and caused him unceasing torture. But it was also known that he devoted to work all the time which his bodily pain robbed from his

THE CHIEF MINISTER

hours of sleep, and that none of the torments of his sick flesh found entry into that unattainable soul.

Later, especially by the Romantics, he was accused of cruelty and inhumanity; and certainly he was pitiless when reasons of State so demanded. But it was himself whom he sacrificed the first to his ideal, and on none of his victims did he impose worse punishments. The ludicrous pictures of him traced by Dumas, Vigny or Hugo have left their traces in the public mind, which snatches too readily at fictions of crude simplicity. In no way does Richelieu resemble these traitors of melodrama, these heroes of a crime story. Ambitious and calculating he certainly was, but having the sense of a superiority which gave him the right to wish for everything and impose everything, he could make instant decisions on the means necessary to his ends; and, without diminishing his stature, it can be admitted that he was as supple and secretive as the most able politicians, that he played with wonderful virtuosity the double game imposed by circumstances, that he did not hesitate, if necessary, to belie his thoughts, or even to bow before those whose bodies would serve as his footstool. But when the day came and, standing beside the young King, he could tell himself that he was the real successor of Henri iv on the throne of France, he cast off the dirt which he had traversed to reach there, and no dross was left clinging to the diamond. It is impossible not to see in Richelieu the strongest characteristics of the figures of Corneille, types not created by Corneille, but in which were expressed the ideal of an epoch in which there survived the Spanish love of grandeur, corrected by French reason. Of all spiritual qualities, the most outstanding and the most admired was then the will, a will so firm in furthering the triumph of its purposes that

RICHELIEU

Corneille was able, on this one principle, to construct a whole dramatic achievement, in which is shown, not the triumph of duty (as is sometimes claimed), but the triumph of energy, in whatever direction it is turned.

The direction in which Richelieu's will was to move was, first and last, towards the greatness of France. It must be fully realised, once and for all, that all his actions were directed towards that end; otherwise there is a risk of completely falsifying any view of him—any view, that is to say, based on traditional morality. His ministry appears to us as one of the most authoritarian, and also one of the most effective, dictatorships known to history. Its deep strength came from its roots in the monarchic idea: the King was beside him, the King legalised his actions. From that point of view, and in that aspect, Richelieu's dictatorship can well be related to the dictatorship of Mussolini; obviously they cannot be compared in their final tendencies, as Richelieu's was a dictatorship of the Right, whilst Italian Fascism is of the Left. But the principle is the same: a delegation of executive power, privilege of the King by national tradition and divine right being in the hands of the minister, who receives his authority from the royal figure and brings to the latter his will and his genius. If the power of one man is not to be endlessly debated, denied or attacked, it must plunge its roots deeply into the national past. The renown of Louis XIII must be that he quelled his anxieties and his pride, and raised up Richelieu to stand beside him.

One is too ready to regard Louis XIII as a mere tool in his minister's hands, the passive holder of an indispensable signature, to be set at the dictator's will on decrees which the latter alone had promulgated. The truth is very different. Often, no doubt, Richelieu compelled the

THE CHIEF MINISTER

triumph of his will; but he can never be said to have imposed it. The King did not escape Richelieu's dominance—nobody could—but of all those who lived in his orbit, he was certainly the one who could most easily strike clear of it: not by strength of mind, but by a deep realisation of royal greatness. Therein lay the essence of Louis XIII, who was more mystically a king than Louis XIV was to be. The latter, majestic, flattered, triumphant, moving from festivity to festivity, with mistresses innumerable, naturally felt himself superior to all human beings; but in that sense of easy domination, aristocratic pride and worldly vanity, as well as an indisputable and lofty self-satisfaction, counted for as much as the sense of kingship. Louis XIII was shy, melancholic, diffident; his neglected and scorned childhood left a lasting scar on his mind; not even in youth did he have the commonplace charms which suffice women, and in consequence, no doubt, of certain physical defects, he had gradually transformed his distress into detestation, his tepidity into chastity. In the midst of this brilliant Court, Louis XIII felt himself to be one of the least fortunate, one of the least attractive, and perhaps the most disinherited figure. But he also knew that he was King, that the sacred oil had set him apart from men and placed him above them. This keen sense of his regal majesty was a refuge for his thoughts, and was also, perhaps, the cause of his most bitter feeling of loneliness. It was a heavy burden of dignity, under which he refused to bend. He entrusted Richelieu with the conduct of affairs because in him he recognised the only man who could control them according to his ideal; and although he sometimes hesitated to sign an order which was perturbing in its severity, he was not slow to bring himself to do so, because he always realised the determination to safeguard the greatness of

RICHELIEU

the throne and the unity of France. In all the decisions of his ministers, the monarch intervened; he studied them, sanctioned them, shared responsibility for them, and had his share of the credit for them. This government was a very close collaboration.

In a consideration of the first moves made by Richelieu, and his first intervention in European politics, it is impossible not to recall the famous sentence in his *Political Testament*: 'When your Majesty resolved to grant me at once a place in your councils and a great part of your trust, I promised your Majesty that I should exert all my industry and all the authority which it has pleased your Majesty to grant me, in working for the downfall of the Huguenot faction, in lessening the pride of the powerful and in exalting the name of your Majesty to its due peak amongst foreign powers.' Thus, standing back from the often inextricable confusion of all the plots and designs in which he had himself been involved, the Cardinal set forth the three essential objects of his attention and activity, and provided future historians with this triple division, so harmonious and concrete, and so well attuned to the laws of traditional rhetoric.

Richelieu's policy in attaining power was not based on his first superficial impressions: for years and years he had charted his course, fixed on every stage, chosen his alliance, discovered reefs and cross-currents. In his preliminary surveys, as we know, he had always depended largely on the information provided by Father Joseph, that wonderful political explorer, whom nothing escaped, who never missed essential interests—the welter of diplomatic equivocation, the capuchin who had penetrated every Court of Europe—Richelieu's surest friend and lynx-eyed agent. In his *Supplément à l'Histoire de France*, Lepré-

THE CHIEF MINISTER

Balain states formally: 'He listened to the counsels and overtures proffered by Father Joseph, not to declare war, which had never been in his mind, but to strengthen himself with several allies; and this he did consequently upon several conferences between them, when he was still Bishop of Luçon, still residing at his priories of Les Roches and Coussay, where Father Joseph often saw him, being even then in close relations with him.'

This evidence should be set alongside the letter in which the Cardinal announced to his confidant his accession to power: 'You are the chief instrument employed by God to lead me to all the honours to which I have now attained. I beg you to come as soon as may be possible that you may share the control of affairs. There are certain urgent matters which I am reluctant to delegate, or to settle without you.'

These two texts enable us to gauge exactly the importance of Father Joseph, and the absolute trust which Richelieu placed in him.

But what were these urgent matters which he would not entrust to anyone else, or settle without the capuchin's advice?

The most pressing, and the most disturbing, was undoubtedly the matter of Valtellina, an inheritance from the preceding government, and on which stress must be laid, as it sorely perplexed him, but represents only one of the numerous points of friction between Spanish policy and French.

Valtellina is the name given to the valley of the Adda, which flows down from the Alps towards the Lake of Como. It offers a practicable passage, two or three miles in width, between Northern Italy and the Swiss Grisons, from which

RICHELIEU

the Inn Valley and all the Central European states could be easily reached. At this period the Duchy of Milan, under Philip iv, belonged to Spain, and Philip's cousin, the Emperor Ferdinand, held the valleys of the upper Adige and the Inn. In other words, Valtellina was the natural passage between the possessions of the House of Spain and those of the House of Austria, and enabled them to join their armed forces. And a glance at a map will show that this junction enabled Spain and Austria to encircle France. It was therefore a vital French interest to prevent this.

Valtellina, formerly a part of Milanese territory, was now linked up with the Grisons, and on unfriendly terms therewith—so much so indeed that the inhabitants of the latter, Protestants under Germanic influences, were constantly at loggerheads with the Catholic and Italian denizens of Valtellina. Using these bickerings and clashes as a pretext to restore order, Spain decided in 1620 to intervene, and Spanish troops now occupied the whole valley, effecting a junction with the House of Austria.

At first sight this problem seemed perfectly simple, and it appeared necessary to consolidate France's old-standing friendship with the Grisons, an excellent reservoir of troops for the French armies, to help them to get rid of the over-zealous auxiliaries who imposed themselves upon them. But this policy had not been pursued, and French intervention had hitherto been confined to vague protests, and a hollow form of opposition which revealed the indecision and impotence of the French government. The truth was that this question of Valtellina was paramount for the future: a decision on this matter would define the attitude of France in Europe for many years to come. For Spain and Austria, with Papal backing, represented the forces

THE CHIEF MINISTER

of Catholicism, to which France, the eldest daughter of the Church, belonged. Resistance to the supremacy of the House of Austria, then predominant, meant a breach in the unity of the Catholic powers, an alliance with the Protestant States, a weakening of the greatest moral force in the world, a furtherance of the Reforming movement. Such a resolve might in any circumstances seem formidable and even intolerable to an old nation, fundamentally Catholic, and in which the State religion was Catholic. But it was all the more so—and paradoxical as well—if that very nation, on its own territory, and for the safeguarding of its own unity, should be constrained to wage ruthless war on Protestantism, the separatist claims of which endangered the nation, whilst at the same time it had to make foreign alliances with Protestantism against the most Catholic empires in the world! This policy logically implied such a contradiction that it had been dropped since the time of Henri iv. His adoption of it is comprehensible inasmuch as that monarch had origins linking him with the Reform movement; but it could not be likewise with a deeply Catholic king whose ministers were also Catholic. In fact, this alliance with Reform had to be finally set aside as soon as the supreme control of French affairs passed into the hands of a prince of the Church.

In these circumstances, instantly and with sovereign decisiveness, Richelieu made plain the principles which the Government intended to pursue: French policy was to be freed from all considerations directed towards Rome, and although this policy can hardly be described as laic (a word which would have meant little at the time), it was at all events Gallican. In the foreground stood his concern for national prestige: Catholic interests were only secondary; it was not from a religious point of view that Richelieu

RICHELIEU

fought against Protestants within France, but because they tended to form a sort of republic menacing to French unity. In this matter of Valtellina the difficulty was increased by the close alliance formed by Pope Gregory xv and later by Urban vii with Spain: the Papacy, in fact, sought to remove the Catholic inhabitants of Valtellina from the dominion of the Protestant Grisons, and provided troops for the Spaniards, who, to safeguard their passage, feigned likewise to favour the liberty of Valtellina.

Ever since September, 1624, the Cardinal had fixed upon the main lines of his course of action. It was startling, and anyone who still supposed that the scarlet cloak would be merely a sumptuous ornament on Richelieu's shoulders, had to face the fact that, set at the head of the French kingdom, he would never consent to seek any interests other than French. The Pope was astounded to find himself being told, by what amounted to an ultimatum, to leave Valtellina. He refused, never imagining that this new-made minister would follow up words with action, and go far beyond this attempt at intimidation. He was undeceived.

Three months later, Annibal d'Estrées, Marquis de Cœuvres, ambassador to the Grisons, received from France a wagonload of gold, and definite orders. Immediately he entered Valtellina with 3,500 French troops, recruited a Swiss army of equal strength, marched on the pontifical garrisons, cleared them out, and occupied the strongholds commanding the passage-way. The Pope was beaten by a half-Protestant army, under the orders of a French cardinal.

To the whole of European diplomacy this was a fantastically melodramatic situation, the symptoms of a sudden fever and a collective touch of madness: Richelieu had

THE CHIEF MINISTER

kicked an anthep and its denizens were scurrying in all directions. That most severe Republic of Venice, obsequiously and devoutly Catholic, suddenly discerned the peril to herself of Austrian imperialism: and now that this formidable neighbour had just suffered a reverse, thanks to the Franco-Protestant alliance, Venice was opportunely reminded of her natural, republican affinity with the Reformers, themselves of republican temper. She realised, in fact, that being first and foremost a commercial power, she had an interest in sympathising with the Huguenot aristocracy, who had such strong leanings towards commerce and banking; and the upshot of her reflections was an alliance with France against the House of Austria and Spain. Savoy, ruled by Charles Emmanuel, was in need of money. Richelieu provided it, acquiring thus a new ally who, accompanied by Lesdiguières, immediately set out to attack Genoa, the shipping and banking centre of the Spaniards in Italy.

Negotiation kept pace with warfare. All over the European chessboard the pawns were shifting position. France was now forcing the pace. Richelieu concluded an alliance with Holland, to whom he paid a sum of 1,200,000 *livres*, an outstanding debt to her since the Treaty of Compiègne, and joined hands with England by the marriage of Henrietta of France to the Prince of Wales. With wonderful duplicity, meanwhile, he strove to allay the vexation of the Pope, for he had no intention of embroiling France and the Papacy. He had shown his strength, and indicated his intended course; it was now possible for him to lay balm on the wounds of self-respect, and even, if it seemed wise, to prove to the Papacy that he had tried only to act in its interests. And thus the Cardinal came to busy himself with appeasing the

RICHELIEU

Sovereign Pontiff: no doubt, in this matter of Valtellina M. de Cœuvres had been too hurried, too peremptory. A soldier, he had allowed himself to use armed force, but he had not received any such orders. But there, what's done can't be undone! The pass was no longer in Spanish hands—and, in any case, had they had any right to be there? The French, of course, had taken their place. But Frenchmen were just, Frenchmen were respectful guardians of the law of nations, and did not intend to retain their conquered towns. It would suffice to make Valtellina neutral and forbid its use as a passage.

And so Valtellina became neutral, though narrowly watched by France, and always ready to receive the garrisons, while the territorial link between Spain and the House of Austria was snapped.

Was the Pope satisfied with the explanation given him with these lavish assurances of respect? Not altogether? No matter: it was so easy to prove that the new resolves of French policy were aimed only to further the triumph of Catholicism. Where ought the path of the Reform movement to be blocked? Should it not be in France, where it had stumbled right against the barrier of Catholicism? What would become of religion if France turned Protestant? But—the allies who lent their aid to these rebels were Catholic powers! And the foes of these same Protestants were England and Holland! How could men dare to accuse Richelieu of forgetting his duties as a priest and a prince of the Church? Was he allied with England? Perhaps: but he was setting a Catholic princess on the English throne, and that was no mean victory. And was he allied with Holland? Yes: but so as to combat French Protestantism more effectively. In short, his policy could

THE CHIEF MINISTER

be interpreted, in the proper light and perspective, as a struggle against heresy. And as the Pope was here concerned chiefly with saving his face and was not seeking a rupture, he consented to be convinced.

It was only too certain that the separatist moves of the Reformers imperilled France. For whilst Richelieu employed all his diplomatic resources in the Valtellina imbroglio, with money and arms as well, the Huguenots were continually threatening, and in the always restless south-west, instigated by Soubise, a veritable rebellion was ready to break out.

Thus, from the first stages of his personal control, we see the Cardinal a target for all his future enemies and problems. For the moment his sole question was whether the time was ripe for a policy of violence against the constantly rebellious faction. Were these new alliances really solid? Should they not be subjected to the test of time before the test of fact was imposed on them? If a halt could be called with the Valtellina score, and a breathing-space be continued for recovering strength and replenishing the exchequer, would not that be the wisest policy? The treasury was almost empty, the people were in sorry plight, and plague-stricken too. . . . No, this was not the moment for great decisions! On the contrary, peace must be made, a twofold peace with Spaniards and with Protestants; and this would be attained, in the Cardinal's own terms, 'by methods of unwonted zealousness, which will bring the Huguenots to consent to peace from fear of the zeal of Spain, and the Spaniards to make peace from fear of the zeal of the Huguenots.'

The Treaty of Monçon, signed on March 5, 1626, fulfilled almost completely the Cardinal's wishes. It forbade Spain passage through Valtellina and secured the

RICHELIEU

demolition of all her forts. Only the Catholic religion was authorised in Valtellina, and the Grisons received a yearly tribute of 25,000 *écus*. On the other hand, La Rochelle, the centre of the Protestant agitation, had submitted on February 5; the angry but powerless Protestants, deprived by Richelieu's skill of their expected Spanish help, had been obliged to accept what was dictated to them. The treaty, if loyally observed, was tantamount to a capitulation on their part: the town was given a royal commissioner, restored the confiscated property of ecclesiastics, granted Catholics their liberty of conscience, and demolished the chief fort, that of Taddon, whilst leaving the Crown in possession of its own, Fort Louis. For the monarchy this would have been a superb success, if it had been final. But Richelieu had no illusions about that aspect of it. He had sought a truce, for a tranquil survey of the situation, after his abrupt start. His only positive and definite success had been the expulsion of the Spanish from Valtellina; but this, as he said himself, was something '*importantissime*.' Apart from this, he had taken up his position. The House of Austria was not laid low, nor did Spanish arrogance feel slighted; but France, which since the death of Henri iv had seemed to be a minor under a guardianship, was showing her determination to resume her rightful rank, and it was difficult not to feel that this rank was to be the front one. Throughout these diplomatic moves and counter-moves, these attacks of trickery and the higher hypocrisy, Louis xiii had followed his minister with a degree of earnestness and conviction which left no hope of their being separated. Over all Europe, turbulent and divided, chaotic and irresolute, one dire menace spread its shadow; that of seeing the establishment of the hegemony of a country which, amid the groping of nations devoid of

THE CHIEF MINISTER

an ideal, becomes aware of its own spiritual strength and aspires to attain its own unity.

But whereas the great European powers, admiring or anguished, recognised the greatness of this minister who, as if in the last stages of a race, had boldly and brilliantly brought his horse from the rear to the head of the leaders, the old and turbulent French nobility once again sought to shake itself free from all bonds of dependence. That frenzied selfishness of the political clans is one of France's gravest misfortunes. In different forms it recurs in all periods of French history; against the particular interest of a group or party, the general weal counts for little; and every day still, the future of France can be seen sacrificed to the theoretical or electoral needs of the governing faction. In just such a temper did the nobles rebel. What did they want?

They wanted complete independence from the central power, governorships, strongholds wherein they could entrench themselves and assert their sovereignty, and money, at the cost of the treasury. The death of Henri iv, the Regent's weakness, the effacement of the young King and the obscurity of the ministers, had all given them hope at one time or another. The advent of Richelieu, and his masterful assertions of vigour and rectitude of thought, brought it home to them that to succeed in these schemes they must make haste, before this uncompromising dictator had gained too secure a dominance over France. In this way, almost simultaneously, the Cardinal found himself obliged to settle, at least provisionally, the three problems which he was later to define in his *Political Testament*: those of the House of Austria, the Protestants, the nobility.

How was it that the nobles did not believe that they

RICHELIEU

could overcome the Cardinal and undermine his prestige? It was so recent a growth, and seemed still so fragile! For, after all, on what did it rest? Solely on the will of the King. To reach his present peak, Richelieu had previously joined with Marie de Medici, and so long as this endured he had been able at least to lean on the whole body of that faction. But once in power, he had abandoned the Queen's policy, and she was furious to see him making alliance with Protestant powers against Spain. She might still smile on him, dominated by his irresistible ascendancy; but it was none the less true that she was bound to cherish sour resentment, and that she would not uphold him long. On the other hand, the young Queen, Anne of Austria, was violently opposed to the minister. A sad destiny, that of these princesses married for political reasons! Whilst Henrietta of France, scorned and bullied, spent her tearful days and nights in England beside an indifferent husband, who was dominated by that insolent and foppish favourite, the invincible Buckingham, Anne of Austria, in France, was pining away with boredom. She could not complain of the actions of Louis, who was ever courteous, but of his aloofness, his shyness, his amazing physical frigidity, which amounted to repulsion. It is practically certain that, in this sort of widowhood so insulting to her beauty and so galling to her senses, she was perturbed by the dazzling elegance of the said Buckingham, who came as ambassador on the conclusion of the English marriage. Flirtation went so far that the seducer, accustomed to so many triumphs, tried one night in a garden to take the young Queen by force; suddenly alarmed, she cried out, her legs bruised by the gold lace which flamed on the Don Juan's hose. Her calls for help frightened the over-gallant ambassador, and he made his escape. But he returned, and she was weak

THE CHIEF MINISTER

enough to receive him, and to allow him to kneel beside the bed where she lay. There was no secrecy at Court; eyes were at the cracks of every door and curtain, and every sound was listened to. So the King was informed, and the Cardinal also. Two of the Queen's personal servants were dismissed, one for having failed in his watchfulness, the other for conveying letters to his mistress from the charming and exiled Madame de Chevreuse, who had been Buckingham's protectress in the affair and was anxious that the Queen should learn from him the delights wherein the King had not indulged her. The upshot of this romantic intrigue, like a tragi-comedy in the Spanish manner, was that Anne of Austria naturally ranged herself with the foes of the Cardinal. Richelieu, decidedly, stood very much alone. But behind him he had the confidence placed in him by Louis XIII, and the extent and depth of this the nobles could not properly gauge.

Every conspiracy needs a moral leader, whose personality is strong enough, or even symbolic enough, to impress the simple and draw them on, and needs also an expert to control operations. Here, he was ready to hand—Gaston d'Orléans, the King's brother, now eighteen years old. The opposite of his brother, Gaston was a bold buck in love affairs, whose nocturnal adventures were much talked about, and who for this reason made a strong appeal to women. Happy in his lot, Gaston had no thought of setting himself against his brother, and doubtless never intended to; his ambitions were short in range and light in substance. But the nobles counted on using him as a flag. And as for the practical leader of the conspiracy, the man of action who should find a means of disarming the King by eliminating Richelieu, he was discovered in Gaston's own tutor, the Marshal d'Ornano, to whom a

RICHELIEU

fellow-plotter, the Duc de Vendôme, wrote that 'the Crown would sit well on Monsieur's head.' But such intrigues cannot be woven in total secrecy: a few rumours always filter through, and Richelieu was too shrewd not to have spread a network of his own spies over the Court. Upheld by Louis XIII, who showed now a fine power of dissimulation, flattering and charming the Marshal when he had already condemned him, the Cardinal, by the King's orders, arrested d'Ornano and imprisoned him at Vincennes, before the plot was fairly going, and without worrying about finding irrefutable evidence. 'In matters of conspiracy,' he declared, 'it is almost impossible to have absolute proofs; presumption must serve when the juncture is urgent.'

Barely a week after this arrest the Cardinal found himself on the verge of assassination, his life saved only by the frivolity, fickleness and unwitting treachery of one of the conspirators, Henri de Talleyrand, Marquis de Chalais, Master of the King's Wardrobe. What was this brilliant Court butterfly doing in the plot? He was then twenty-seven, and his empty life had so far been given over to amours. It was love that led him into plotting, in order to win the favour of the Duchesse de Chevreuse. A victim of romantic story-books and the amorous precepts of the *Précieuses*, he hoped in this way to stake out the Chart of Delights with heroic landmarks. But as the commander of Valençay, to whom he confided the plan of assassination, showed signs of informing the Cardinal, young Chalais thought it wiser to go himself, denounce his accomplices, and propose to Richelieu continuing in these good offices of his for the future. Richelieu agreed, and of course refrained from attending the banquet at which he was to have been stabbed. After which, he made a hurried re-

THE CHIEF MINISTER

conciliation between Louis XIII and his brother Gaston, in the course of a scene when embraces were perforce exchanged and tears perforce shed; and he made bold to arrest and imprison the Vendômes, the natural sons of Henri IV.

At last the Cardinal thought he could breathe freely, when his secret agents, ever on the alert, informed him that the conspiracy was reviving even more actively. Nothing was ended, nothing was settled. The conspirators harried Gaston d'Orléans with their reproaches, and tried to incite him afresh against Richelieu in favour of his hapless tutor, who still lay in prison. As for Chalais, Madame de Chevreuse had taken him back; dazzled by her assurances, and uncertain whether he preferred winning this too charming woman or the military post promised to him by the Cardinal, he proceeded under the fascination of those languorous eyes to betray the man whom his former treachery had saved. The project now was nothing less than bringing Gaston away from the Court, sending him to Metz or La Rochelle, and setting him up as claimant to his brother's throne. That was the gist of the instructions transmitted to him by Chalais, in the course of midnight conversations which delighted his romantic tastes, and with an unconsciousness that almost inclines one to indulgence.

But Richelieu showed no indulgence. He decided to make a terrifying example for the seditious nobility. Actually, Gaston d'Orléans was neither more nor less guilty than Chalais; they were a pair of lads working each other up into folly. But the King's brother was beyond attack. With amazing callousness or cowardice, as soon as he saw things go wrong and heard of Chalais's arrest on July 8, Gaston revealed all he knew, and denounced his

RICHELIEU

accomplices. Richelieu knew them all: d'Ornano and the Vendômes, the Comte de Soissons and Madame de Chevreuse, and Anne of Austria. In order to improve the turbulent young prince, he was married on August 5 to the richest heiress in the realm, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, a princess of the blood. Richelieu remembered his sacerdotal status when it seemed advisable, and officiated in person at the ceremony, giving his blessing to the young couple.

Then, having got rid of Gaston, who abandoned himself to the delights of this new love, Richelieu turned to deal with Chalais. Instead of handing him over to the ordinary jurisdiction, the Cardinal appointed one of those special tribunals, a Commission, to which he so often resorted in years to come. This procedure had for him the merit of frankness. It implied that the case was decided beforehand, and that obedient Commissioners were chosen to give the verdict dictated to them. This form of justiciary brought much blame and invective on Richelieu's head. But would it have been preferable for him to leave to more scrupulous judges the task of deciding, as it might turn out, against himself? It was essential that he should be set above all attack, and be free to pursue his set task. It may be claimed that he was not indispensable, but he himself was certain that he was. The value of his political task may be questioned, but he conceived it as a necessity, and believed that no other man could ensure the pre-eminence of France. And for those reasons, as his conscience told him, he was entitled to get rid of anybody who thwarted his actions or planned to nullify them; and when he decided on an example as indispensable, this was not in him cruelty, callousness or inhuman hardness of heart; he had no feeling of exercising a right, but felt that

THE CHIEF MINISTER

he was fulfilling, painful as it might be, a paramount duty. It may be granted that, from a moral point of view, Richelieu was mistaken. But such an error does not reflect on his humanity.

In prison, Chalais was pitiable. He accumulated denunciations in order to gain pardon, and in his highly pitched letters, penned in a style at once heroic and precious, he gravely compromised Madame de Chevreuse. Through him Richelieu found out all he wished to know, and then, despite all supplication, handed him over to his judges. An example was necessary, and the other conspirators were too highly placed to be possible alternatives.

The judges declared Chalais guilty of the crime of *lèse-majesté*, and condemned him 'to have his head cut off on the Place du Bouffay at Nantes, his head to be stuck upon a spike over the gate of Sauvetout, his body to be quartered, the quarters to be tied to stakes at the four main approaches to the town, and, prior to his execution, to be put to the torture, all his goods to be confiscated, and his posterity to be deprived of noble rank.'

It was not Richelieu's fault if the execution was turned into a butchery. When Chalais was to be beheaded, on August 19, 1626, the executioner could not be found. His place was taken by two prisoners, who were promised freedom as the fee for their services. They accepted eagerly, but their skill fell short of their zeal. They had to make eight or ten attempts; they had to seek the advice of the confessor, and turn the wretched Chalais this way and that, torn and bleeding, before they succeeded in beheading him, not with the sword, but with a cooper's axe, and at the twenty-ninth stroke.

A month later d'Ornano, whom Richelieu had refused to free, died in his prison, perhaps from fever, or perhaps,

RICHELIEU

as has been averred, from poison. And thus the conspiracy came to its end, in an atmosphere of terror. The nobles, who had so often risen for fifteen years past, and had seen their plots and intrigues constantly result in profitable reconciliations, were seized now with horror, indignation and revolt. They dared not raise a voice, having abruptly realised that if they assailed the Cardinal, nothing could save them, neither ancestry, nor friendship, nor past services. In their eyes he was the enemy of their caste, whereas in reality he had simply proved that, so long as he lived, the royal sovereignty would have in him an implacable protector. From now on he was under a sentence of death, and he knew it. But that did not intimidate him. He could protect himself as well. Already thirty trusted gentlemen escorted him wherever he went; he added another score, pending the formation of the companies of guards which later he maintained.

‘It is vexatious,’ we read in a letter of his to Bouthéillier, ‘to be forced to set guards about oneself, being certain that from the time when one is constrained to this, one can say farewell to one’s liberty. Nevertheless, if it were needful to do again the things which I have been obliged to do, I would gladly act thus again; and the more they seek my life, the more shall I seek to serve the King.’

Note that this is in a private letter, addressed to a friend; it is a sincere revelation of the Cardinal’s thoughts. In his position, then, there was no longer any question of personalities, but only of principles. Fate had made him the buttress of a great idea; he would support it, and no human consideration, whether of fear or of pity, would ever be able to check or delay his action.

CHAPTER VIII

LA ROCHELLE

WHILST unceasing and hostile intrigue encircled him at Court, and whilst he had to be continually negotiating throughout Europe to maintain his alliances and oppose France to Austria, Richelieu could discern the muffled activities of enemies at home even more dangerous than those abroad. If ever the French monarchy and its established order were imperilled, it was by the Protestant party. At whichever period we regard human history, in any land or under any regime, we can observe the constant presence of two opposing forms of thought: the individualistic, tending towards a more or less disguised and codified anarchy, and the constructive, tending towards the establishment of an organisation based on discipline and authority. In the last analysis, our political opinions only translate our temperament, and alter therewith as it is altered by the age. The Reformation had rallied against the twofold hierarchy of Catholicism and monarchy all those who, under the guise of restoring the primitive purity of Christian faith, were in reality revolting against certain political disciplines for which it had formed a base. And most of these men were certainly sincere; they did not themselves perceive that what they feverishly desired was the downfall of institutions which did not grant enough to the individual man. Hostile to pontifical power, they were consequently of republican temper—provided always

RICHELIEU

that their republic would be an oligarchy of aristocrats—heroic, and ready for any sacrifice, traitors to their country by reason of the noblest virtues.

Richelieu was well aware that the treaty, whereby, a year before, he had mastered La Rochelle, the stronghold and capital of the Huguenots, was a precarious and ineffectual gesture. If the Protestants had observed its terms loyally and totally, they would have been encompassing their own ruination. But they were not yet sufficiently weakened, and had still too much strength at home and too many connections abroad, for the Cardinal to hope that the account could be so easily closed. By imposing this treaty, which apparently rendered them subject to his will, he had merely taken advantage of a fortunate interval, when the opponent was weakened and perturbed. The moment of calm enabled him to direct his attention and strength elsewhere; but he knew that the pacification was only provisional. The Protestants, determined not to bow to defeat, were negotiating with their foreign friends and Richelieu was not blind to the anxieties, rancours, and vengeful desires which his successful diplomacy had roused amongst the latter. Spain resented her check in the Valtellina affair, and England, notwithstanding the marriage of Charles I and Henrietta of France—or rather because of it—and above all under the intoxicating influence of Buckingham, showed signs of willingness to support the Protestants, and even to make war against France.

In the perspective of time, Buckingham seems to us little more than a sumptuous puppet. But his contemporaries, dazzled by his handsome looks, his elegance, his amorous triumphs, and of course by the favour shown him by King Charles, attributed to him an undeserved importance. He had a touch of megalomania, was inflamed

LA ROCHELLE

with pride and self-conceit, full of childish narcissism, yet highly attractive by reason of his exceptional physical beauty; but he was capable of gross and debased behaviour, especially towards women, a weathercock in his fancies, scatter-brained; the all-powerful favourite, whose whims ruled England, seems to us indisputably a pathological case, with the symptoms of general paralysis of the insane. For ever confusing political and amorous intrigues, and steering the former by the compass-needle of the latter, he led England into the most perilous adventures. He proffered his love now to the wife of Olivares, the Spanish prime minister, now to Queen Anne of Austria, according to whether it was a question of marrying his royal master to an Infanta or to Henrietta of France. In Spain he had failed, winning neither the Infanta for the King nor the Duchess for himself. It was a hard blow, and sufficient in his view to justify a war into which he at once drew his country. France could provide him with a compensation: Anne of Austria was young and beautiful, avid for gaiety, neglected by her husband, and sentimental as befitted her years—how could she fail to respond to this dazzling personage who was the dream of every woman? And, for his part, to add a Queen of France to the list of his conquests—what a splendid climax to his career as a lover! The incidents of this royal idyll are memorable: Anne of Austria, on the point of being violated in the garden at Amiens, crying out, putting the too ardent seducer to flight; then, later, incautiously receiving him, making it only too plain that he was forgiven, and doubtless regretting her foolish modesty. When Buckingham realised that his follies had closed France against him, and that Anne of Austria would not be his, his thoughts were only of revenge, and, without even a declaration of war against France, he

RICHELIEU

began to seize all the French vessels his frigates encountered, on a pretext of their carrying contraband.

It was easy for him to turn English opinion against France: the marriage of Charles I with poor young Henrietta had raised plenty of difficulties. The young Queen, an ardent Catholic, insisted on the promises of benevolent neutrality which had been given by the wedding contract, but the whole Court, headed by Buckingham, with the King as usual in his wake, multiplied affronts and persecutions towards Henrietta's Catholic entourage. Her life was a torment, and the handsome minister, furious at being thwarted by Anne of Austria, vented on the young Queen all his spite, as if she had been responsible.

In short, the atmosphere was thunderous, and Richelieu, perfectly well informed as to events in London, and easily divining the feelings and schemings of his strange and all-powerful colleague, prepared for the inevitable war. Very skilfully, and with a swiftness of decision which turned the situation to his own advantage, Richelieu forestalled Buckingham, who, in order to concentrate his strength against France, was trying to arrange a truce with Spain; and the Cardinal quickly joined hands with the latter against England. Buckingham then gave the conflict the status of a religious war; planning to attract the Duke of Savoy, the Duke of Lorraine, the Protestant nobility, and all the Huguenots and enemies of Richelieu, he declared King Charles's intention of coming forward to undertake the defence on the Continent of the Reformed Churches. Over a hundred vessels set sail under Buckingham for La Rochelle on June 27, 1627.

The struggle was not so much between England and France as between the French Protestants, whom the Cardinal had vowed to overwhelm, and the monarchic

LA ROCHELLE

and Catholic ideal, offensive to the spirit of the Reformation. It was a decisive episode in the life of Richelieu, who had resolved to make an end of that spirit, and to base the unity of the kingdom on the obliteration of the Protestant oligarchical, internationalist faction.

The main weakness of France lay in her scanty, not to say non-existent, maritime forces, which were weak enough for trade, but still more so for war. That was one of Richelieu's constant preoccupations: a navy cannot be improvised. At the time of the last Protestant rising he had hired a few English vessels, with a view to intimidating the inhabitants of La Rochelle. But the English were now the enemy, allies of the revolt, and they could not be intercepted at sea. A fleet was always one of the favourite dreams of the Cardinal, and one of the most troublesome to make a reality, because it needed arsenals, skilled workmen, time and capital. But he kept it so much in his thoughts that, in order not to let things pass into the hands of some Court admiral, he had caused his own appointment, a few months previously, as supreme head of the navigation and commerce of France. In other words, he added the ministry of marine to his other portfolios. Hardly had he assumed his new charge when some Portuguese vessels, with cargoes of valuable merchandise, were cast up on the coast of Guyenne. The rights over wrecks appertained to Richelieu's naval authority, and entitled him to a share of about 200,000 *livres*, or about four million francs of modern currency. Richelieu declined it, and decided to pay this first capital sum into the special fund which he proposed to constitute for the purpose of providing vessels for France. This action is truly memorable, for although Colbert is often spoken of as the founder of the French Navy, we are too apt to overlook that he

RICHELIEU

only followed the lines laid down by the far-sighted genius of Richelieu.

Even more recently he had given evidence of his maritime knowledge, of his realisation of France's destined share in maritime affairs. This was at the Assembly of Notables held in Paris between December, 1626, and February, 1627, six months before the English attack, and at the time when Richelieu, on the alert and full of suspicion, was already envisaging the new necessities of a sea warfare. In that assemblage of bourgeois and financiers, capable of understanding him and of pondering his ideas, he insisted repeatedly on France's need for a fleet if she was to regain her old renown: he pointed out that Spain, simply through the power of her navy, had extended her empire in the Levant and was drawing to herself the riches of the Western world, that England's greatness depended on her fleet, that the Netherlands would not exist without theirs, that for them all the sea was the natural path along which the provisions of the world flowed towards them, whereas France, so richly endowed by nature with coastline and harbours, had to turn inwards upon herself, live on her own substance, and lie exposed to all the insults of foreign fleets and all the coalitions of maritime powers. Day by day Richelieu reverted forcibly to this subject. To him it was a matter of creating a new cast of mind, which his listeners would propagate all over France. Obviously the result could not become instantly perceptible, but for the future it held promise of power, greatness, riches. And the Cardinal, who could always combine detailed concerns with wide general views, proposed to the Notables a full practical policy.

A navy, he urged, must depend on a small number of great companies; it is folly to leave small merchants to

LA ROCHELLE

trade each for his own hand; how could they defend themselves against the corsairs, or even—as he added ironically—against France’s princely allies? Powerful companies, therefore, should group all the merchants together. But that could not suffice. These commercial fleets must be augmented by a royal fleet, a fighting fleet, which could defend anywhere the honour of France’s flag, and, in the event of war, enable France to dispense with favours begged from her neighbours. As a start, forty-six vessels would suffice.

Deeply impressed by these arguments, the Assembly had deliberated on the Cardinal’s suggestions. They were adopted, and laid before the King. It was doubtless a great deal, for some later date; but nothing could be done when the English attack took place, and Richelieu, as titular head of a non-existent fleet, had to play on land the role of a general. He did so with resolution, ingenuity and a spirit of attack and of tactical control which proved that the former pupil of Pluvinel would have been no less successful as a soldier than as a diplomat.

When Buckingham, with the 120 vessels of his fleet, so richly beflagged that they were compared to the galleys of Cleopatra, was sighted off La Rochelle, his plan was to seize the island of Ré, which stretches from north-west to south-east opposite the stronghold, separated from it only by a channel a mile and a half in width. The island of Ré belonged, not to the Protestants, but to the Crown, and the Crown held there the two forts of La Prée and Saint-Martin. This was a grave menace to La Rochelle. If the island could be captured, it became easy to give anchorage in the bays to warships which would cut off the approach of all French vessels; and if La Rochelle were besieged on land, the town could be continually fed,

RICHELIEU

supplied and reinforced. On the other hand, a land siege was dangerous, as the English knew, because of the surrounding swamps, at once hampering and malarial. The beleaguered, for their part, benefited by good hygienic conditions: the town stood on dry land, and was drained effectively, whilst strong tides kept the harbour well cleared. It looked at first sight as if fortune favoured the English plan. Richelieu had no fleet to offer battle at sea, and if he had found warships for hire, it would have been almost impossible for him to have them handled: the coast, with its currents and cross-currents, between the mainland and the islands of Ré and Oléron called for piloting by men familiar with it from childhood—and pilots were mostly Protestants. There remained, then, the siege of La Rochelle by land. But with what hope of success when, in theory, the town could be freely and uninterruptedly fed and reinforced?

When the French sentinels in the Ré forts sighted the English sails off the Sables d'Olonne on July 20, 1627, Richelieu was with Louis XIII at Villeroy-en-Brie, in the château of the Marquis d'Alincourt. They had left Paris together for the south-west on June 28, to march against the English, whether in Guyenne or in Poitou, a landing in either being expected. Richelieu had mustered troops in Lower Poitou, under the orders of Monsieur, who was appointed lieutenant-general of the army. Unluckily, Louis fell ill of a tertiary fever, which brought him almost to death's door. Richelieu himself was far from well: only his determination kept him up and active, but his will could work miracles, and his head throbbing with continual megrims, his body a prey to the most torturing (and, alas, ridiculous) distresses, he detached himself from his corporal wretchedness and refused to acknowledge it. So grave

LA ROCHELLE

was the King's state that the Cardinal did not leave him, by day or by night. Between these two men there was a strange solidarity which, without any friendly tenderness, but for quite unemotional reasons, linked them by a bond stronger than blood or affection. They shared one ideal, which gave them both an aim in their joint lives: they held power, they disdained love, and they admitted one single passion—for the greatness of France. To maintain and exalt that, the King's authority and the minister's genius were essential, equally valuable, equally indispensable. Divided, they would collapse. United they formed, through their purpose and will, one of the strongest moral powers in Europe. And it was then that Richelieu selflessly kept vigil over the King, tending him with his own hands, with utter devotion, and without hinting at his anguish or the gravity of the military situation.

For meanwhile, secretly, he was receiving emissaries who brought news of how matters were shaping.

On July 20, screened by their fleet, the English landed troops at Sablanceaux, on the western extremity of the island, nearest to La Rochelle. The French garrisons, under the Marquis de Toiras, could muster only about 1,000 men, against the 8,000 of the invaders on the headland. Toiras put up a vain resistance, at the cost of two hundred of his forces. To avoid disaster he had to withdraw, and shield his soldiers in the two forts left to him, abandoning the rest of the island to the enemy. The fleet spread out along the shore, and the small French garrison seemed in a sorry plight indeed, under the orders of the hapless Toiras, whose incapacity was only matched by his foolish self-esteem. (During this crisis Richelieu took his own decisions; he was reluctant to risk endangering the King further by informing him of the bad news, and took

RICHELIEU

upon himself the organisation of the defence. But he was not alone, and never was alone in the hour of danger: Father Joseph was beside him, fanatically inflamed against the Huguenots, endlessly exhorting the Cardinal to force them to reason, hard as the war would certainly be. Even in La Rochelle the capuchin had friends and spies and emissaries. Furtively, with a wonderful feeling for intrigue, information, ubiquitous penetration, he directed what might be called the Intelligence Service of the kingdom. He was at pains thus to realise the exact position of La Rochelle, its financial resources, its capacity for resistance, the nature and importance of its food supplies, and its morale in general. These are prime factors in the conduct of a siege, and it was to the undertaking of a siege that the conversations of Richelieu and his confidant were directed, while the bustling surgeons crowded round the King, bandying Latin maxims, lancet or syringe in hand.

First and foremost steps had to be taken for victualling the little garrison shut up in the Ré forts. From Bayonne Richelieu fetched fifteen pinnaces, in which every night an unceasing supply of flour and biscuits could be smuggled across; to the same end he hunted out a few of those sea-rovers who knew every rock and current, and, on land, all the by-ways along which men could slip unnoticed. With well-paid sailors, and a few fearless and unscrupulous adventurers, the troops could be kept supplied with the necessities for subsistence in their strongholds. Meanwhile, it was urgent to complete the forty vessels on the stocks in the shipyards, and the task of arming the ten large ships purchased by France from Holland. Money was short. Richelieu advanced two million francs of his own, and borrowed twice as much from his friends, in order to make urgent provision without involving the credit of the

LA ROCHELLE

kingdom. After those first steps, and while a naval guerrilla was taking shape against the English at Ré, Richelieu sent an emissary to buy thirty new pinnaces at Bayonne, and commandeered all the rowing vessels of the Garonne and the Dordogne.

At last, on July 29, Louis XIII was strong enough to rise from his bed, and Richelieu could inform him of events, and of the steps he had so far taken. He knew that if the citizens of La Rochelle had not yet gone over to the English, it was simply because they felt they would be more secure once Buckingham had made himself completely master of Ré. Moreover, Huguenot emissaries and envoys of Buckingham were insolently calling on the King to raze Fort Louis, and at that price purchase the departure of the English fleet. The malice, or hypocrisy, was childish; the demolition of the fort would sanction the permanent sacrifice of the town, by delivering the Huguenots from the menace it held over them. The Protestants had rushed into civil war, with foreign support. The unity of France was at stake, and all the kingdom's resources would be devoted to the cause if necessary, but La Rochelle had to be taken and the Protestant revolt crushed.

It took five months to organise the expedition. Things were becoming grave at Fort Saint-Martin. The food pinnaces could not always make landings; the English fleet tightened the blockade; the beleaguered men, short of bread and drinking-water, were at the end of their tether. La Rochelle was now in avowed rebellion, and had signed a treaty of alliance with England. From day to day the fall of the fort and the occupation of the whole island of Ré were expected. When that happened, La Rochelle would become impregnable.

On October 12 Richelieu and Louis XIII came to take

RICHELIEU

over control of the operations, and established their headquarters to the south-east of the city. It was a magnificent and delectable spectacle to see the Cardinal turned into a general. Pale, elegant, highly strung, his breastplate gleaming blue, his clothing a russet brown with gold embroidery, his felt hat with a long drooping plume, his sword at his side, a cane in his hand—where now was the prelate, and who would suspect that he had ever existed? With venturous recklessness he chose as his lodging the small château of Pont-de-Pierre, isolated by the seashore, where he was still nearer to the scene of action. The westerly wind bore up the sound of the surf. He was there, at his post of command, as if he were on the poop of his flagship, so unprotected that one night the men of La Rochelle, informed of his presence there, sent over a few adventurers charged with his capture. But the Cardinal had his spies. He left his château for a night, and the attacking party fled headlong before a troop of musketeers and some horsemen, emerging from behind the house and commanded by the King in person. Still, he advised Richelieu to take better care of himself in future!

The arrival of the King and the Cardinal raised the courage of the besieged garrison on the island, starved and sickly, as also of the pinnacle crews, restoring their courage and imbuing them with fierce determination. One necessity was paramount—to bring succour to the fort's garrison, because on their safety depended the final success, or disaster. A few days before the arrival of Louis and Richelieu, in the atmosphere of excitement engendered by their arrival, a flotilla of forty-six vessels was mustered, and unexpectedly sent by night through the English fleet in the direction of the island of Ré: twenty-nine of them managed to slip through, in the wild confusion of the in-

LA ROCHELLE

decisive battle, an impossible chase, a hand-to-hand fight in which the combatants could not recognise each other. The result of this bold stroke was that, despite a desperate intervention of Buckingham, who tried to set fire to ships right beneath the guns of the fort and was violently repulsed, the besieged garrison were provided with stores and munitions to last them for over a month.

On the spot Richelieu could see instantly the nature of the problem: Toiras had provisions to hold out until November 13, but not beyond; meanwhile, it might prove possible to give some supplies to the Fort de la Prée, but it was unlikely that the surprise sally could be repeated after this first almost miraculous success. Accordingly, it was necessary to compel the English to withdraw before November 14, or else the island would be lost and La Rochelle saved. The loss of Ré would involve that of Oléron, a rich and fertile island, and the Protestants would thus hold an impregnable base.

That the English might be expelled from Ré was Richelieu's conclusion.

He prepared the operation with Napoleonic vigour and precision. As base and starting-point of the attack he chose the island of Oléron, to which he crossed in a heavy sea, after assembling 6,000 men and 3,000 horses in reinforcement. The royal troops rallied with a crusading enthusiasm behind them, kindled not by the Cardinal, who was waging a political struggle, but by the King, more devout than his minister. When the English realised the importance of the move they became demoralised, in fear of being driven into the sea. Then, in a desperate resolve, Buckingham attacked the Fort Saint-Martin, garrisoned by Toiras and his men, before the King's troops had disembarked. It was a great fight, heroic on both sides, but lost beforehand

RICHELIEU

for the attacking side. They had only forty ladders—not nearly enough to seize a fortress. The occupants had the joy and encouragement of massacring their enemies and hurling them into the moats.

On November 8, six days before the date determined by Richelieu, the English withdrew, chased and harried and cut to pieces by the royal forces led by Schomberg. On leaving France Buckingham gallantly admitted, before the French prisoners, that 'Monseigneur the Cardinal was the greatest man in the world.'

Free on the seas, and now in a position to prevent all supplies or aid from the side of Ré or of Oléron, Richelieu could turn to blockade the strongholds. He meant that the blockade should be complete, with no cracks in the armour, so that the town should be doomed to capitulation. Its defences were formidable. Conceived on the latest ideas of fortification, they enveloped La Rochelle with a great horseshoe of bastions, ditches and fortified gateways, the two arms of the system stretching out as far as the sea. Between these opened the harbour, sheltering two hundred vessels under the protection of two massive towers and a huge chain barrier. The roadstead, extending beyond the harbour, ended in two promontories, the northern point of Chef de Baie and the southern of the Minimes.

Richelieu conceived a line of circumvallation which, to give him control not only of the harbour, but of the whole roadstead, would start at the Minimes and touch Fort Louis on the northern bank. This was a second vast horseshoe, to be constructed outside the existing one. Right along this surrounding one, planned to isolate La Rochelle from the mainland and prevent any communications or passage of troops from the town, Richelieu

LA ROCHELLE

further constructed redoubts, shelters and forts which were to ensure his control of the operations.

These operations were indeed a grandiose conception, for the conduct of which the Cardinal had under him three army commanders, the Duc d'Angoulême, Marshal de Schomberg, and Marshal de Bassompierre. They were difficult operations, involving movements of large bodies of troops, and carried out in feverish and intense haste under the persistently sneering eyes of the courtiers, always hostile to the minister, and who would have gleefully welcomed a reverse which might lessen his omnipotence and ruthlessness.

As regards the sea, the Cardinal resolved to close the harbour entrance with a stone breakwater, backed by a submarine barrier consisting of the wrecks of two hundred outworn ships sunk one after another, their masts chained together. The building of the breakwater was begun on November 30. Richelieu spent whole days on the inspection of the work in progress, moving tirelessly in his high boots from point to point, accompanied generally by Spinola, the famous Genoese soldier who had become a Spanish general, renowned for the capture of Breda. This life was too hard for either the Cardinal or the King (who even worked on the masonry himself for hours on end) to endure to the end. Louis XIII succumbed again to the illness which had laid him low before the Ré expedition, and had to leave for Paris to rest. Richelieu went for a few miles with him, and such was the closeness of their relationship now that on parting with his minister the King wept. Next day the Cardinal, too, collapsed with one of those dire fevers which had scourged him since childhood and ravaged his slender frame. His chief fear was lest Louis should hear of it and be distressed. He

RICHELIEU

wrote instantly to the King, begging him to keep his mind at rest, and then, pale, shivering, with chattering teeth, but still indomitable, he went on pushing ahead the works.

The breakwater was to be a little over 1,500 yards in length. A central channel gave access to the tides, but batteries would command the passage, which, in any case, had been made almost impossible by the sunken ships, barriers of masts and chained stakes, and further by the pinnaces constantly moving about in the outer harbour.

Such was the apparatus, titanic in its conception, which would ensure the maritime blockade, and prevent an English fleet from coming to the aid of La Rochelle.

On the land side the circumvallation was perhaps even stronger; and although the Court remained sarcastic and unhelpful, although Marie de Medici, increasingly hostile to Richelieu, did all she could to discourage Louis XIII from this new 'siege of Troy,' it seemed clear that patience would inevitably win. Not that Richelieu recoiled from violence or deception: nor would he have been unwilling to act by surprise. Thanks to Father Joseph, who had contact with persons inside the town, the Cardinal learned that it was possible to pass underneath one of the gates by way of a network of underground channels which started in a brackish marsh. Some salt-makers had given him the plan of these muddy waterways. An expedition was at once arranged: drain-diggers, salt-workers, petard-eers, were to reach this gateway by these slimy underground routes, blow it up, and fling a few troops into the town.

The attempt took place by night, on March 12, 1628, in cold and fog. The Cardinal, amongst his men, waited beside his horse to leap into the saddle and rush to the attack when the noise of the explosion was heard. He was

LA ROCHELLE

there till dawn, impatient, his jaw tightly set, wondering what was happening; then, in the morning, he resigned himself to going away. An error of route had separated the boats carrying the grenadiers, the salt-workers and the soldiers, and at last, unable to join forces, they came back. Touching this episode, Richelieu wrote: 'There was reason for wonder in the execution, and no less in the disruption, of this well-contrived plan, which God desired to alter into another manner of chastisement more fitting to the wrongdoing of the guilty, which was so extreme that they could not be given executioners less cruel and more infamous than the authors themselves, encompassing their own death of hunger and all kinds of miseries.'

Indeed, the sudden capture of La Rochelle would have greatly shortened the sufferings of the townspeople, which week by week became more tragic and more demoralising. On the French side, meanwhile, Richelieu was spending money lavishly, hardly counting costs. He knew how harmful a lengthy wait can be for troops who are a prey to weariness, and he worked to keep them in cheerful spirits. An ode by the poet Racan, who was then serving under arms, described the abundance and diversions enjoyed by the besieging battalions, which, he said, made it seem as if the disasters of war were allowed to beset only the foes of this army.

In the middle of April, Louis XIII returned to his troops. But meanwhile the people of La Rochelle, in spite of the fanatic exhortations of the mayor, Guiton, were beginning to wonder what was being done by the famous English fleet which was to come to their succour, which they awaited every day, scanning the sea horizon, but which never came.

At last it came. The look-out men of both sides re-

RICHELIEU

ported the first vessels on May 11, 1628. Richelieu and Louis immediately went over to the southern headland of the roadstead, the Minimes, in order to watch events. The English came forward in fine order, with the air of supposing it possible—as perhaps they did suppose—to force the passage. Suddenly a violent cannonade broke out: all Richelieu's forts on the breakwater and at the extremities of the bay joined in the bombardment of the fleet. Admiral Denbigh, at its head, judged it prudent to withdraw and drop anchor out of range.

From La Rochelle came desperate appeals; resolute messengers contrived to come out every night; and on May 16 Denbigh made another, but unavailing, attempt. But it was only a demonstration, and so feeble that it may be wondered whether it served any purpose beyond saving his face. At last, two days later, the unexpected happened, and obliterated the last hopes of the beleagured: the English fleet sailed away as suddenly as it had come. Are we to believe, as Voltaire tells, following Court rumour, that Richelieu forced Anne of Austria to exploit Buckingham's passion for her by making him withdraw? Are we to admit, as the Dutch diplomatists averred, that France simply bought the English minister, at a very high price? Does each of these claims contain part of the truth? What is certain is that, unless for some intervention of the kind, the attitude of the English fleet is inexplicable; and we know also that, as regards intrigue, espionage and buying of consciences, the Cardinal with Father Joseph's aid was capable of working miracles. This *volte-face* of the English was one such. Bossuet sets down the glory to the influence gained by the Queen of England over her husband, but this seems highly improbable: when Charles I learned of this 'disgrace,' he displayed the utmost distress.

LA ROCHELLE

Inside the besieged city the famine was becoming cruel. Men drew sustenance, according to the *Mercure Français*, from boiled boot-leather and cooked shoes. But the wretched people held out, and had vowed not to yield so long as one man was left to bar the gate. With renewed excitement they again awaited English help. And there was, indeed, serious talk of this. Late in August Charles I, his 'disgrace' unavenged, decided to send an impressive and irresistible fleet, laden with food and soldiers. But on September 2 Buckingham, who was to command this, was assassinated by a Puritan officer, Felton, who was later to be depicted by Dumas. The confusion following his death held up the English operations, but did not make the King renounce his plans: he was resolved to wash out the affront received. In La Rochelle, meanwhile, sick and weakly men, reduced almost to skin and bone, were dying wholesale. Survivors were gnawing harness-leather, but their resolve was still indomitable. They still awaited the English fleet.

Once again they saw it arrive. On September 28 and 29 one hundred and fifty vessels, under Bertie, deployed in a wide semicircle before the bay. On October 3 the cannonade began. With the courage of professional soldiers Richelieu and Louis XIII served the guns at the most exposed point. Five thousand cannon balls were exchanged, and the English suffered heavy losses and serious damage. Next morning they opened negotiations. With that the courage of La Rochelle collapsed: they were at the end of their tether, morally and physically, and at last they accepted the idea of surrender.

On October 27, 1628, six Notables came to parley with Richelieu. Deathly pale, they could hardly stand upright:

RICHELIEU

for several days they had not even been able to chew the grass of the earthworks, for none was left, nor boot leather nor belts, for none was left; and now, powerless, conscious of their utter defeat, their hearts broken with despair, they appeared before Richelieu. He received them, and in these vanquished men, whom he expected to find submissive and even craven, he discerned with amazement a stubborn spirit of boldness and rebellion. And yet, as he said himself, these wretches were but 'the shadows of living men.' The shadows spoke. They came to offer their surrender, but they made so bold as to state their conditions. The men of La Rochelle asked nothing less than the establishment of a general treaty for the whole of their party, the continuance of their privileges, the safeguarding of the property of their leaders, the integrity of their fortifications, and recognition of their government.

Richelieu listened at first with amazement, and then with irony. Such extravagant claims sprang from delirium rather than insolence. He replied simply that, apart from the King's pardon, which they ill deserved, they had nothing to hope for, nothing to ask for, and that they had best surrender, with reservations. The deputies saw that the game was lost, and insisted no further. For them this was the end.

It was not a treaty that Richelieu granted them, but a pardon, in the King's name. Those inhabitants who had not left the town were granted their lives and their property, with leave to practise their religion. But furthermore, the practice of Catholicism was re-established in La Rochelle, which ceased now to be the holy city of Protestantism. One of its temples was handed over to the Roman clergy and would become a cathedral. La Rochelle became an episcopal see, and the bishop's mitre was to

LA ROCHELLE

be given, if he would accept it—which he did not—to Father Joseph. A royal official was appointed to control the finances, justice, the police, in the King's name. All the fortifications were razed, excepting the towers raised on the seaward side, which might shield the new royal city against a foreign invader. Richelieu even ordered the demolition of the Fort Saint-Martin, which had been doomed by the fact of its resistance to the English attacks; the isle of Ré, armed with this formidable weapon, must never become the stronghold of any rebel. Richelieu seems to have foreseen Fouquet.

Superb festivities were held in the captured town, amidst a population of phantoms. Passing through the streets with the King, Richelieu must have felt that he had attained one of the peaks of his existence: with the intrepid enthusiasm of a conqueror he had lived through one of the most heroic stages of his astonishing destiny. This siege was his work, as it were his creation. And the King must have recognised this when, a few days later, he issued the ordinance announcing his capture of La Rochelle, 'thanks to the counsel, the outstanding prudence, vigilance, and laborious service of his dear and well-beloved cousin the Cardinal Richelieu.' Laborious it certainly had been. In the whole as in the parts, Richelieu had conceived everything and determined everything, along with his two accustomed collaborators, Father Joseph and the King. The capuchin directed the espionage, and used his powers to inflame the zeal of the troops; and through his emissaries he insinuated discouragement and distrust into the stronghold. Louis XIII, alert in practical affairs, rounded off the plans of attack, and set them on paper himself with patiently elaborate detail. The Cardinal presided over everything, as commander-in-chief on land,

RICHELIEU

as admiral on sea, as engineer, as comptroller of finances, as paymaster, always erect and ubiquitous, moving hither and thither by day and by night, his face drawn and pale, his eyes feverishly burning, thin, indomitable.

But in the Court, meanwhile, as he knew, storm clouds were gathering. He was becoming too great. He had bound the King to himself by bonds that were too strong, his authority was becoming intolerable, his wealth more spectacular every day; there were murmurs and plotting, and Marie de Medici, enraged at finding herself shut outside by the man who owed his fortunes to herself, was far from the least of his enemies. 'Shall we be mad enough to take La Rochelle?' insinuated the ill-wishers. Richelieu had not left them the chance of deciding: it was he, not they, who had captured the town. It was a question either of establishing in perpetuity the internal unity of France, or of renouncing it for ever. Defeat would have meant not only the collapse of the minister, but a definite fissure in the kingdom. Into this battle Richelieu had flung all his weapons, his future, his health, his genius. The battle was engaged, the victory won. It was amid countless corpses that he visited the place, with a serenity of mind which did not allow him a twinge of pity. He simply noted, with his usual sobriety, in that slightly archaic and intricate style which was peculiar to him:

'The town was found to be full of corpses, in rooms, in houses, in the streets and public squares; the weakness of the survivors was such, and the number of the dying so great, that the former could not bury the latter, and left them dead lying where they had expired, but for all that there was no great pestilence in the town, because they were so attenuated by starvation that when dead they dried rather than rotted.'

LA ROCHELLE

On All Saints' Day the Cardinal doffed his breastplate and campaigning uniform, unbuckled his sword, and resumed his ecclesiastical vestments to go and celebrate Mass at the convent of the Oratorians. It was a Mass of inauguration and of deliverance. The Protestants were crushed. But Richelieu had still an overwhelming task ahead of him in the accomplishment of his plans regarding the nobility and the House of Austria.

CHAPTER IX

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

AFTER the exhausting labours of this siege, where nothing had been done but by his orders and under his eyes, Richelieu had need of a spell of relaxation and rest. This was necessary, not only to allow him to rebuild his forces, but the better to consider the work already accomplished, to survey its stages, to determine what was to follow, and, above all, to taste, with the joy of victory, the hope of new success. But his destiny withheld from him these hours of contemplation, which are perhaps the only hours of a man's existence in which he can be truly conscious of his realisations and enjoy his life. His own was so precarious! Threatened from within and from without, by illness which slowly consumed it, by assassins who lay in wait for it, it could only survive by the daily grace of Providence and by the will power which seemed to stay both disease and the assassin. For several years now, Richelieu was aware that he was exposed to a violent and dangerous crisis. He could never see it further ahead than six months: this was the utmost limit which he allowed himself. But, of these six months not a single minute must be lost, not a single instant must be given over to suffering, to weariness, or to joy. Thus, from one period to the next, he built up for himself an existence relatively short, if we compare it with others, but which was perhaps the fullest of all human lives. If we consider it in its totality, sum up its

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

results, the immensity and continuity of its effort, we are inspired by admiration and awe. We can scarcely conceive of happiness in solitude, without friendship, without confidence, without love; and it seems to us that the timorous and distrustful attachment of the King, the devotion of Father Joseph, the over-eagerness of some secondary collaborators, were never able to fill Richelieu's heart. From these sympathies, however deep they might be, all sensibility was absent; they were intellectual unions formed in view of a common ideal, exterior to themselves; but beauty, the fullness of a union between human beings, is it not precisely in a disinterested character that they dwell and do not they exist for themselves, without claiming anything but themselves? Richelieu knew nothing of those attachments of free hearts, or forced himself to ignore them. His time was too well proportioned, his work too considerable, to allow himself the luxury of sentiment. Whilst constructing his breakwater and investing the rebel city, he was aware that his enemies were profiting by his absence in efforts to strike at him, and his couriers informed him that, in the north of Italy, a new storm was gathering. This was representative of his whole life: occupied by a pressing task, which claimed all his genius and all his time, and compelled at the same time to make his presence and action felt wherever it was necessary for France to prove herself and claim her rights.

On December 26, 1627, that is to say during the siege of La Rochelle, the Duke of Mantua, Vincent II de Gonzaga, died. He left his inheritance, the fiefs of Mantua and Montferrat, to a French prince, the Duc de Nevers, Charles de Gonzague. An alliance was immediately formed to prevent the two most powerful strongholds of

RICHELIEU

northern Italy, Casale Monferrato and Mantua, from falling into the hands of France. Spain, Savoy and the Emperor formed a league to prevent the Duc de Nevers from taking possession of his fief, and to demand a division. The Duke of Savoy, Charles Emmanuel, immediately threw his troops into the disputed territories, and Gonsalvo de Cordova besieged Casale.

So long as he was engaged at La Rochelle, Richelieu allowed these operations to continue; but as soon as he was free he hurled himself into this new enterprise. Once more he found himself faced by his constant foes, Spain and the House of Austria. He could not allow them to recover in Montferrat what he had taken from them in Valtellina. No doubt the Protestants of the south-west, under the orders of Rohan, maintained a state of war against France; but the taking of La Rochelle had removed their refuge, and there would be plenty of time later for delivering the final blow. The Italian affair, on the other hand, was pressing. Richelieu therefore hastily called together all his troops and, though just returned from La Rochelle, he departed with Louis XIII, once more exchanging the sacerdotal vestments for breastplate, cuirass and sword, to direct in person this expedition. He had shown that he could conduct a siege; he now proceeded, with an impetuosity which confounded his adversary, to wage a mobile war. By dint of forced marches the French army crossed the Alps. Richelieu seemed to be one with his horse. He sped along the roads without pause. Louis XIII was happy; his two grand passions were music and war; thanks to the Cardinal he could at least satisfy the second.

The expedition at this season was difficult. The Austrian leaders considered it impossible, and smiled at

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

these fools of Frenchmen who fancied they could cross the Alps in winter with a whole army. They did not realise that the troops were inspired to frenzy by the presence and heroism of their young King, and by the irresistible prestige of this soldier Cardinal. On March 1 they crossed Mont Genève. During the night of March 5-6 they passed through the narrow, rocky, snowbound defile known as the Pass of Susa. Next day they gave battle with irresistible fury; the siege of Casale was raised, the besiegers put to flight, and negotiations immediately opened. The two leaders then separated. Richelieu remained on the spot with a party of troops, to attend to the conclusion of the treaty, and to guard the securities. Louis XIII, with the rest of the army, returned hastily to France, and took the field against the Protestants of the south. He took and burned Privas, a stronghold of the Huguenots in Vivarais, from May 14-27. A fortnight later, one of their last fortresses, Alais, capitulated. The whole of the Protestant territories lay open to the depredations, devastations and cruelties of the soldiery. For the Protestant party the situation was desperate. The Duc de Rohan, in spite of his desperate fanaticism, realised that he must come to terms. Richelieu arrived and presided over the negotiations, which ended in the Peace of Alais on June 28, 1629.

This treaty marked the end of the Cardinal's efforts with regard to the Reformers. His political foresight and the greatness of his design were manifest in the fairness, broadmindedness and tolerance which he displayed in his terms of peace. Louis XIII, whose devoutness was much more narrow, would have enforced reprisals and vigorous measures, imagining thereby that he was destroying and crushing Protestantism. Richelieu saw further ahead, and was aware that a ruthless treaty, accepted of necessity,

RICHELIEU

with hatred, would rally against the Crown a secret opposition, relentless, always ready to profit from internal and external trouble, and to provoke insurrection, local rebellions, civil wars with foreign help. The enemies of France must have no allies on French territory. No doubt Richelieu would have liked to establish religious unity within the kingdom; this could scarcely fail to be part of his ideal. But if, in so trying, a new ferment of discord was introduced into the country instead, was it not better to be content with a submission obtained by gentle methods? The Peace of Alais took away from the Protestants what made them a party of separation and rebellion—their defences and strongholds. They were granted freedom to worship, but were obliged to allow freedom of worship in their towns to Catholics; they were reinstated in civil rights; the hospitals of La Rochelle were restored to their religious orders; a Jesuit college was established at Montpellier. But beyond these lawful and reasonable measures, no persecution was directed against the Huguenots; all was forgiven, everything pardoned. The Edict of Nantes was finally re-established; this was an affirmation of freedom of conscience, and Richelieu, in order to disarm adversaries hitherto intractable, announced officially that the King would make no distinctions among his subjects, whatever their beliefs. Moreover, on April 19 and 24, two treaties had been signed, one at Susa, the other at Paris, which confirmed the maintenance of the Duc de Nevers in his fief of Mantua, under the protection of Venice, the Papacy, and the Duchy of Savoy, united against Spain; and the alliance between the Crowns of France and England was also re-established. Richelieu was now free to return to Paris, and he accordingly set out. His health was worse than ever, and for a long time he

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

was delayed at Pézenas, by a series of fevers which might well have killed him. He fought them down, and returned, but not to find peace.

The terrible attack now to be directed against the Cardinal may be considered as one of the episodes in the long war which he waged against the insolence and individualism of the nobles. But here it was not he who took the offensive; it was his adversaries who gathered around the Queen-Mother, hid under her authority with the hope that she would impose her will upon the King, and so tried to get their revenge and strike down the man who had humbled them.

The more they toadied to him, the more respect they showed to him, through natural servility and through prudence, the more the nobles hated him. He was the master: the aristocracy did not yet know it. They accepted, not always without resistance, the royal authority. The King being one of the finest gentlemen of France, his superiority was not offensive. Richelieu made them aware of the inflexible will of a dictator. These great vassals of the Crown who did not scruple to revolt, in whose minds France was only a federation of their fiefs, these dukes and princes who, since the death of Henri IV, so often rose and combined in the hope of exalting their own governments and replenishing their own coffers, were suddenly obliged to obey and accept a political conception, monstrous in their eyes, by which a central authority, unique and absolute, was imposed with equal force on all parties in the kingdom, levelled under the same yoke. For those old families who had hitherto shared in the sovereignty, it was a sheer insult. The maker of this revolution was not even their equal by birth; a provincial noble, without renown or fortune. His ancestors had served well no doubt,

RICHELIEU

but with no exceptional merit. By allowing them some favours, and the bishopric of Luçon to their descendant, the Crown had amply rewarded them. And it was this muddy-booted prelate, destined at first to command a company of gentlemen-at-arms, who now . . . What a long way he had come, this insinuating, humble, modest youth, flattering the powerful, writing catechisms and delivering sermons! Little by little, he was raised to the assembly of the clergy, and by virtue of his youth, a certain physical grace, and his odd appearance, he had slipped into the friendship and confidence of the Queen-Mother! This was now ended. As for the Queen-Mother, she knew now where to attach herself. From the moment when Richelieu, scornfully called Luçon, was enthroned in the councils of the King, he had thrown aside, with an ingratitude unparalleled even at Court, all those to whom he owed his fortunes. He had succeeded in imposing himself upon the King, and now was reigning in his place. The upward rush of this career is dizzying, so swiftly did the stages come. As for the ideal which he wished to realise, the Court could not understand it, for, if the word *patrie* existed, patriotism was still quite foreign to the aristocracy. The nobles still held to a feudal conception: when the King is attacked, or wishes to launch an attack, he calls up his vassals, who join joyously in the adventure. But France? . . . Who had been able to define France? . . . What solidarity was there amongst Frenchmen? . . . Richelieu himself, moreover, thought of the grandeur of the monarchy rather than of the country. But in him were inseparably blended the two ideas: royalist and Catholic, he felt himself to be also French. In this will for domination and unity, political, religious, internal and external, the Court could only discern the display of an

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

almost delirious pride, the satisfaction of a frenzy for personal power.

A reputation of cynical cupidity was added: there was always talk of his rapacity, his scandalous enrichment, this sudden fortune which had made a poor prelate without revenues, the most miserable and beggarly in France, one of the richest personages in the kingdom. It was said that there was no benefit which he would not accept for himself or for his relatives; and it cannot be denied that the accusation was altogether unfounded. First in his ancestral home, and at Luçon afterwards, Armand du Plessis had known straitened circumstances, which he had always ardently longed to escape. But in him this was no manifestation of sordid greed, of amassing for its own sake, and finding its greatest joy in possession. For him, wealth became one of the attributes of all great dignity, and, as it were, its tangible character. It is one method, the most material but not the least efficacious, by which a great personality thrusts itself forward: he must, in order to extend his importance, give the impression of wealth, no matter how much he must deprive himself while doing so: every public office exacts from the holder a certain amount of ostentation to distinguish him from the crowd. The man of position must know how to spend, but, therefore, still more, how to amass; and the Cardinal understood both. Louis XIII was by temperament more economical; and we see that in 1629, in a long memorandum which Richelieu drew up and expounded for the King, concerning the duties and obligations of the Crown, he passed over this recommendation very significantly: 'that it was prudent for His Majesty to compel the great to entertain well, and, however difficult it might be for him personally, he must support it with patience, saying to himself that,

RICHELIEU

as this was a charge, it was also imperative for a king to have persons of this quality under him.'

Richelieu himself was never at fault, and practised his duties of hospitality more and more sumptuously. Thus it was that, ten years later (we have his accounts for 1639), we find that his household budget relating to hospitality alone, without including ordinary daily expenditure, was, in current values, 600,000 francs for the year. Such expenditure implied large revenues, and we may understand that, in face of such a transformation of fortune, the Court had murmured.

It is equally certain that, in the hostility of the nobles towards the Cardinal, his attitude concerning duels played a large part; so much so that a man who perhaps had no desire to fight, now itched to prove himself since he could no longer do so without risks. It was not Richelieu who had thought to ban duelling or punish the duellists. On the contrary, in 1626, he had mitigated former edicts, which, however, had never been applied. Henceforth, when no one had been killed, the two adversaries were deprived of their posts and pensions, and the aggressor was banished for three years. Only those who killed their opponents were punished by death, and their seconds also. But the intolerable novelty was that the edicts were applied.

They were in fact applied, and certain banishments and deprivations made the nobles hesitate, whilst also exasperating them. It was this irritation, and the desire to provoke and baffle the Cardinal, which, in 1627, gave rise to the affair of Montmorency-Bouteville. This Bouteville, it is true, could not complain of the royal favour: he had violated the edicts twenty-one times, and had killed one of his adversaries, Torigny. It was this death that the Baron de Beuvron wished to avenge. Bouteville,

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

who had prudently taken refuge in Flanders after the death of Torigny, now showed an insolence as offensive to Louis XIII as it was to Richelieu. For, the King having advised him that he might return to France but must not reside in Paris, Bouteville determined to fight in Paris, in the Place Royale itself, under the Cardinal's windows. He and Beuvron procured seconds: in every way, even if there were no fatal outcome, they were incurring the capital penalty. They knew it; but Bouteville did not believe, and no one believed, that Richelieu would dare to behead Montmorency.

The duel took place on May 12. Bussy d'Amboise, one of Beuvron's seconds, was killed. Beuvron fled to England. Bouteville fled post-haste towards Lorraine, but the Cardinal did not allow him to escape. He was brought back to Paris and imprisoned in the Bastille.

There was a powerful wave of feeling at Court. The whole family of Montmorency besieged the King and the Cardinal. They prayed, they lamented, they recalled the services of their ancestors, and the brave conduct of the guilty one in all the fights in which he had taken part. How could anyone so heroic and open-hearted be called to account?

'It could be said of him,' wrote Richelieu, 'that he had never done anything against the laws of worldly honour, nor sought deliberately to violate those of humanity, nor exercised cruelty against those over whom the fortune of arms had given him advantage.' But he also added: 'It was impossible to grant him his life without opening the door to duelling and to all sorts of infractions of law. . . . To save him was to authorise what was forbidden by law. . . . All kinds of impunities would be established and, in fact, the King's authority would be ruined.'

RICHELIEU

This was to Richelieu the supreme argument. When the royal authority was in danger, every humane consideration must be set aside. Above the individual a principle was asserted which could in no circumstances be denied. Louis XIII, whose heart was tender, and who was troubled by scruples, hesitated, and would willingly have commuted the penalty to one of detention.

Richelieu's reply was harsh and ironic:

'It is a question of cutting throats by means of the duel, or by Your Majesty's edicts. The punishment of these gentlemen will be a convenient, though not infallible, means for the first effect, and mercy a very assured one for the second.'

On June 22 Montmorency-Bouteville and the Comte des Chapelles were beheaded. 'We see those who have lived like devils dying like saints,' writes Richelieu, 'and we see the extinction of duels brought about by those who had no other care beyond fomenting them.'

This execution was to all the nobility an insufferable outrage; they dared not raise their voices too high, for it seemed as if the echo of the official axe could be heard at Court; but the antipathy against the Cardinal developed into hate, and it was evident, from this moment, that the nobility, on every occasion, would rally to the side of his adversaries.

Such was the feeling towards Richelieu when he returned to Court in 1629, after re-establishing the position of France abroad, and terminating the religious wars at home.

It was at this moment that attacks were hurled against the Cardinal, redoubled in frequency and violence, causing him anxieties which proved how dangerous they

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

were. Political discourses, sentimental discourses, all were spread abroad by Marie de Medici and her cabal. It was felt to be one of those despairing offensives into which the assailant throws all his forces, and plays for life or death with his supreme stake. But, though a drama, this was in many ways also a comedy—in two acts, or, more exactly, a curtain-raiser and one act.

The curtain-raiser took place on the Cardinal's return from Languedoc, when, on September 14, he repaired to Fontainebleau. He knew very well the sentiments of Marie de Medici towards him, and did not ignore the fact that Monsieur was in league with her. Had they not both had the singular idea of signing a declaration which they drew up together, whereby they bound themselves, she, to ruin the Cardinal in front of the King, and he, not to console his recent widowhood by marrying the Princess Maria de Gonzaga, whom the Queen-Mother hated? With a childishness found often enough amongst these great personages—their renown did not prevent them from being mean-spirited, credulous, indecisive, passionate, volatile, and ridiculously conceited—Marie and Gaston had sent their declaration to a mutual friend (the partners had no confidence in each other), who attached it to a necklace: enclosed in a small golden box suspended from a gold chain, it attracted the eyes of the whole Court; every one knew what the box contained.

When the Cardinal appeared amidst these smiling courtiers, self-controlled, obsequious, and believing themselves impenetrable, he read them at once, perceived their reticences, their inward thoughts, their hate. And the icy reception of the Queen-Mother confirmed his intuition: passionate, violent and vulgar, impulsive and without spirit, the Italian became a shrew as she aged, and,

RICHELIEU

though a consummate hypocrite, she had lost the physical power to dissemble. Richelieu understood. He was accustomed to strike hard, and to answer a pinprick with a knife blow. His psychological penetration, infallibly acute, taught him how far he could henceforth depend upon the King. He did not imagine that he would be spontaneously sympathetic, and he cared little. Nothing is more dangerous than those unreasonable affections which create favourites and, when they discover their hollowness, abruptly consign to the pit those whom they have honoured. This was not Richelieu's wish: what he had desired he possessed. The King who, above every human sentiment, placed the consciousness of his royal greatness, and merged it with the greatness of France, had gradually acquired the absolute immovable conviction in a way organic, that Richelieu was indispensable to the growth of France, to her dignity and hegemony, to her internal unity and prestige. It was enough that he should feel him attached to his person by an almost physical bond, a part of himself—the genius and the will which he needed. How could they be separated?

Before leaving the château, Richelieu wrote a note to the Queen-Mother informing her of his decision: he quitted the Court, taking with him his own people, notably Madame de Combalet, his niece, Marie de Medici's lady of the wardrobe.

The Queen-Mother was offended. She desired Richelieu's ruin, but still she must prepare the King's mind, so as to obtain his assent. By brusquely taking matters in hand the Cardinal had left her impotent. How would the King react to this new stupidity?

The attitude of Louis XIII was more eloquent and more significant than his mother could have feared. He gave

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

way to tears, and to such despair, that his confessor, Father Suffren, in his agitation and panic, contracted a blood-poisoning which nearly killed him.

After his tears, Louis XIII decided himself to reconcile his mother, his minister, his brother, and there was a general confusion from which Richelieu emerged with the title of Principal Minister of State, which covered all the functions which he already exercised.

And such was the rise of the curtain. . . .

And fresh difficulties, diplomatic and military, arose in Italy to lead rapidly to the uproarious, violent, dramatic act which ended in the great tragi-comedy of the Day of Dupes.

Austria and Spain were again disturbing the peace of Europe, striving to join hands through northern Italy in the hope of encircling France. To this end they again took up the Montferrat question, as if they had not signed the Treaty of Susa which settled this. Ferdinand II sent an army to occupy the Grisons passes, and Spain despatched the famous Spinola to Milan. He invaded the Duchy of Montferrat, while Colalto, leading the Imperial troops, invested Mantua.

Richelieu at once led an army, as its real if not its titular head, crossed the Alps, and on March 23 seized Pinerolo, which, like Susa, commanded one of the Franco-Italian passes. It was a resounding success, and the Spaniards at once began talking of peace, while the Pope sent as his legate his nephew, Antonio Barberini, accompanied by a young officer of whom history would have more to tell — Giulio Mazarini — to establish an agreement which would have shared the control of the Alps between French and Imperial influence. But it would have been

RICHELIEU

disadvantageous for France to sign such terms, for with Susa and Pinerolo she already held two entrances into Piedmont, and the possibility of covering the rear of the armies which she would eventually send into Italy.

Richelieu was thus faced by a grave problem.

He had won a great victory, and was in a position to make an honourable peace. French finances were not flourishing, and all the machinery of State called for revision and repair. This was a weighty argument for peace. On the other hand, it would have been of prime importance for France to consolidate her influence in northern Italy, and to station there garrisons which would be firmly set, as if in a corner, just where the Spaniards and the Austrians were seeking to join forces. If this solution were decided upon, swift and forcible action was necessary, and Savoy, whose Duke was showing an opportunism amounting almost to treachery, would first have to be occupied.

On May 10 Louis XIII joined Richelieu at Grenoble, while Marie de Medici, the Court, and the aged Guard of the Seals, Michel de Marillac—an austere reactionary fundamentally hostile to the Cardinal—remained at Lyons, awaiting events and hoping for peace. They were visited by Richelieu, who informed them that the War Council, presided over by the King, had unanimously decided to continue hostilities, and to occupy Savoy. This news was received with recriminations and reproaches; but it was an entirely different matter when, having taken Savoy in a few days, Louis XIII proceeded to march towards Tarentaise, as if he intended to cross the Alps. There was such a storm that, in order to explain and justify themselves, the King and his minister hurried back to Lyons, and convened the Council. Marillac, as usual, was abrupt and



KING LOUIS XIII

From a portrait by an unknown artist

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

crude; Richelieu sat tight and allowed Louis XIII to fly into a passion and declare that he would certainly cross the Alps: this time the question was to recapture Casale, and despite the anger of the Queen-Mother and the remonstrances of his friends, the young King, whose true character was revealed by war, would himself have directed operations, if his health, always so feeble, had not obliged him to leave Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne, on July 25, 1630, and return to Lyons. Richelieu, ignoring the dangers caused by his absence, and so leaving the King at the mercy of his enemies, remained in Savoy until August, and returned to Lyons on the 23rd of that month. There he found Louis XIII in a condition which caused grave anxiety. In fact, a month later, on September 22, the King was seized by severe fevers, cold sweatings, tremblings and dysentery, and from the 27th until the 30th all hope of his recovery was abandoned. Moreover, the King himself realised this, and faced death with a high spirit, in full consciousness, confessing and receiving the sacrament, all doors being opened, in order that, according to custom, his subjects might enter and see their King die. The two Queens were there, reconciled for once, in a common grief, but, in the soul of Marie de Medici, distress at the thought of losing her son was balanced by the desire to humble Richelieu, and this sickness, which placed the King in her hands, appeared to her in some ways as a dispensation of Providence. Richelieu was aware of all that went on. He knew that the Queen-Mother was profiting by every lucid moment of Louis XIII to persuade him, passionately, to expel the man whom she considered responsible for his illness—perhaps mortal—and whom she held up to the dying man as the author of all his sufferings and as the scourge of his country. Louis XIII,

RICHELIEU

overwhelmed and too weak to argue, held his peace, or appeared to acquiesce. Marie had given her orders: as soon as the King was dead, the Cardinal must be arrested. Richelieu waited. He had no fear for himself: the disappearance of the King would mean his ruin, but it would also mean the finish of his work, the end, perhaps for ever, of his mighty dream—the hegemony of a regenerated France, united under the authority of the King, in an overawed Europe.

On September 30, an intestinal abscess, the presence of which the doctors had not suspected, opened abruptly; there was a sudden decline of the fever, and a recovery so swift that it seemed almost miraculous. Richelieu was profoundly moved, and wrote to his friend Schomberg: 'I do not know whether I be dead or alive, so much am I still beside myself at having seen this morning the greatest and most virtuous of kings and the best master in the world in such a plight that I had no hope of seeing him alive this evening. It has pleased God, in His goodness, to deliver us from this anxiety. I declare to you that, notwithstanding the assurances of the physicians, my spirit is not yet recovered from the incredible apprehensions which I felt.'

The doctors, however, were right, and Louis XIII was saved—but Richelieu not yet. Evidently, it is not beyond question, as has been said, that M. de Tréville, captain of the musketeers, went with some ten of his guards to seize the Cardinal, and threatened to blow his brains out with his pistol if he showed any resistance! The King having recovered, it was impossible to act without his assent, but he was still weak and, therefore, impressionable; and it was possible to take advantage of his condition to obtain, by surprise if necessary, an order which could be immedi-

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

ately executed. Marie de Medici pestered him. Supplications, reproaches, false accusations, endless demands—in short a whole comedy, systematic and incessant persecutions, which finally succeeded in extorting a vague consent from the invalid. He had energy enough never to give way entirely and, rather than speak a word which might be dangerous, he turned his head and closed his eyes in silence. In Louis lay Richelieu's sole hope: he was his one support.

In other respects dissimulation reigned between the Queen-Mother and the Cardinal. Outwardly they forced themselves to appear natural, with an air of mutual gladness at the recovery of Louis XIII, and it was with every manifestation of perfect understanding that the two adversaries proceeded towards Paris, escorting the convalescent, sometimes by litter, sometimes by boat, from Lyons to Roanne, Briare and Orleans. The Piedmont enterprise continued without the Cardinal. He had made his choice, and the destiny of France depended on him: it was, therefore, of this that he must now think. As if nothing had passed between them, he paid assiduous court to the Queen-Mother, hoping perhaps that his physical power might still influence her. But she had grown strangely old, and he himself, emaciated and grey, had lost the gleam of youth. . . . She strove to deceive him by an increased show of amiability, and at the same time was unceasing in her efforts to persuade the King to get rid of him, asserting to her confidants that she was certain of success.

Meanwhile, as the royal retinue was crossing France, by short day journeys along the sleepy waterways, the Italian expedition was being carried on, and, by his couriers, Richelieu still followed and directed it from a distance.

RICHELIEU

Casale, where the Duke of Mantua was beleaguered, obstinately resisted the attacks of the Imperial armies. A general truce—the negotiations for which brought into the limelight the ingenuity and diplomatic resource of young Giulio Mazarini—was concluded on September 4, 1630. It may be said now that, by the treaties of Ratisbon and of Cherasco, and by a secret agreement signed later at Turin, on July 6, 1632, still at the instigation of Mazarin, the Italian affair ended in a real triumph for French policy: the possession of Mantua and of Montferrat was assured to the Duc de Nevers, while France received Pinerolo and the valley of Perosa. The conclusion of this treaty was described at the time, in the most emphatic terms, by the *Mercure Français*, under the inspiration and probably even to the dictation of Richelieu in these words: 'Thus is dispersed this great storm which seemed to threaten the whole earth, and bade fair to deprive France of her lily, Mantua of her fortresses, Italy of her freedom, the French nobility of its glory, all Europe of its liberty. Thus are come and gone the Germans and Spaniards of Italy, with more shame than profit.'

In other respects—and this a circumstance wherein may be gauged the decisive role of chance—these long negotiations, conducted in secret, had brought into close intimacy Richelieu's agents, and the Cardinal himself, with the Pope's right-hand man, the said Giulio Mazarini, whom we have already seen beside Antonio Barberini, the Pope's legate, after the siege of Pinerolo. The French plenipotentiary, Servien, wrote to his master that 'this Mazarin was the most worthy and skilful minister who could ever have served His Holiness.' Adroit he must have been, for in spite of his humble birth and the obscurity of his past life, this Italian adventurer had been

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

able to make himself indispensable to the Pope, and to attract Richelieu's attention. From this day his destiny was charted. But who could then have imagined that this subtle and restless Italian, whose penetrating intelligence served him like second sight, would one day succeed the man who then governed France? . . . From now onwards he served France: this was the Pontifical policy which, unable to clear the Austro-Spaniards and the French from the peninsula, and obliged to choose between the two causes, turned for preference to France. The Pope's negotiators and those of the Cardinal being henceforth in unison, Mazarin's prodigious knowledge of bargaining and of *combinazione* was of inestimable value, and it is to him that France was to owe Pinerolo. But, while returning to Paris, with the convalescent King and the enigmatic Queen, Richelieu, who could not have foreseen such happy developments in Italy, feared that his absence would entail grievous consequences, and this care was heaped on top of his perplexities and torments. He was not blind to the true grievances of the Queen, nor to what point they were justified by her limited conscience. If he recapitulated them was he not obliged to admit: 'I am her creature; she it is who has raised me, given me access to power, bestowed on me these abbeys and benefices which brought me from poverty to wealth. She reckons that I owe all to her, that she has the right to demand my absolute submission, and that I must have no other will than hers. She cannot understand that, when she made me pilot of the ship, I have been under obligation to account for my acts to none save God and the King. How could we have the same ideals? In heart and in thought, she favours exclusively a Catholic policy: it matters little to her that France might be humiliated. She cannot admit that, fighting

against Protestantism at home, I must also proceed beyond the frontiers. . . . She has other sorrows, a woman's sorrows, a mother's sorrows: I have forbidden her to give to Monsieur—who, alas, will perhaps inherit the throne—the governments of Burgundy and of Champagne. I would never allow our frontiers to be guarded by such feeble hands. She thinks that I am her daughters' enemy, because I have married one to a Protestant prince, and because I fight against the husbands of the two others, the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy. . . . We oppose each other in everything, and always will: the future depends upon what the King wills.'

As regards his personal position, he could take refuge. Two solutions lay open to him for his choice: to seek refuge in Avignon and thus place himself under the authority of the Pope, or to withdraw to the government of Languedoc, which the Duc de Montmorency placed at his disposal. He would thus save his life, his freedom, perhaps some of his wealth. But his work? . . . That alone counted. Nothing escaped him of the projects and plottings of his enemies. His secret service was efficient. He knew that, in a council of war of which he was the object, Marillac, Bassompierre and the Duc de Guise had discussed his fate. Marillac desired his death, and himself offered to be executioner; Guise was content with exile; Bassompierre preferred detention for life in a dungeon. During this time the two queens were circumventing the King, and all this retinue of hatred, intrigue and conspiracy was lazily descending the Loire, under the canopies of velvet and gold and the fleur-de-lis standards. Richelieu travelled on the same 'frigate' as Marie de Medici. It seemed as if these two foes felt the need to be together in order to spy upon each other better; they must not quarrel,

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

or miss one single movement, one word, one change of countenance. Eager, respectful, attentive, the Cardinal seemed to be there for the sole purpose of watching over the Queen and making the journey pleasant for her. Occasionally the King would send him a letter, expressing, in terms more or less veiled, his sympathy. At the end of October they had an interview, in the course of which Louis xiii disclosed to his minister 'all the most diabolical things which the Queen-Mother had said against him, and the expedients she devised to make him believe them.' This brief conversation put the Cardinal's mind at ease: he felt that he could always be sure of the King's attachment, and that his enemies were further from victory than they imagined.

By the beginning of November, all the actors in this widespread plot were in Paris. The Queen-Mother occupied her town mansion, the Luxembourg; the King, driven from the Louvre by the works which were going on there, was installed in the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs in the Rue de Tournon; and Richelieu was lodged in the Petit Luxembourg, the property which he owned in the Rue de Vaugirard. Marie de Medici made a supreme effort in her desire to disgrace the Cardinal. Every morning Louis went to see his mother, with the customary deference which he always displayed towards her. This respect was not mere affectation, but a true fondness, subdued by reason, nourished by a compelling instinct. On this tenderness the Queen-Mother played, seeking to move her son by touching his heart. And it was precisely this which perturbed Richelieu: an acquiescence forced from weakness and filial love! He could not allow himself to be struck down without a struggle. And since he was not invited to defend himself, since he was the culprit at these

RICHELIEU

discussions where his destiny was at stake, it was necessary for him to intervene on his own authority, and to see that a decision was made, but before him—and perhaps, finally, by him.

Marie de Medici had given orders that he was not to be received. On the morning of November 10, when he knew that the King was with his mother, Richelieu proceeded to the Luxembourg. The doors were closed. But the Cardinal knew the topography of the palace. By passing through the chapel, then through a concealed passage, one could reach the Queen's apartment. She would certainly never dream of blocking this door, which was never used. . . . By this route the Cardinal went. He proceeded along the corridor, reached the Italian's apartment, and without knocking, as if he had just happened to be there, opened the door and entered.

'I know,' he said, 'that Your Majesties are discussing me. I have taken the liberty of coming to defend myself.'

Before such insolence, Marie was overwhelmed; furious, almost speechless at the sight of this man, against whom she had closed her doors, making his entry by force, she burst into abusive language and distraught cries. Unable to control herself, she poured out her grievances in front of the minister: that he owed everything to her, that he had received from her more than a million in gold, that he wished to dethrone the King and marry his niece to the Duc d'Orléans and proclaim Louis XIII a bastard! . . . As for Madame Combalet, she was a guttersnipe, an infamous debauchee, and worse. The whole gang must be cleared out, from highest to lowest! This was the end! The King would choose! She would appear at no more of the King's councils while Richelieu participated!

The scene went on without the King intervening. He

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

had spoken only a few words, in an endeavour to calm his mother; then he turned, pale, irritated, and deeply shocked by this burst of abuse. Richelieu's fortitude broke down. Having tried for a long time to control himself, a fit of despair, or of hidden passion, finally possessed him, and sobbing he threw himself at the Queen's feet, swearing that he had never intended to displease or hurt her, and that, if she would be pacified, he would own to faults of which he was innocent.

But nothing would calm the storm of cries and reproaches which raged from the Queen's mouth. Louis XIII had had enough. In a few words he bade the minister rise and leave the apartment, and notified his mother that he would leave for Versailles.

Here took place the celebrated misunderstanding. The two adversaries were agreed, without knowing it, in interpreting the King's attitude in the same way. Richelieu believed himself to be disgraced, and Marie de Medici was convinced that in fact he was. She was so certain of this that she proclaimed her victory, announced that the direction of affairs had passed to Marillac, that all the relatives, friends or creatures of the Cardinal were expelled, that there would be an all-round change. The Court hastened towards the new sun, and, in a few hours, in an atmosphere of gaiety and triumph, a fresh government was imagined, a fresh policy, a share of the spoils, an era of freedom and happiness. Meanwhile Richelieu, inspired by the same convictions, was preparing for flight: he decided to leave for Le Havre, which was open to him, and where, in the event of danger, he would be able to embark. Certain friends, gathered around him, exhorted him not to flee without making a final effort, when a courier unexpectedly arrived from Louis XIII: the minister

RICHELIEU

was summoned to Versailles, to the King. This was more than a sudden striking change: for most of the courtiers it was a thunderbolt.

When Richelieu entered the presence of the King, Louis came forward and embraced him.

'I have in you,' he said, 'the most faithful and affectionate servant in the world: I have been a witness of the respect and the recognition which you have always had for the Queen my mother. Had you been lacking in what you owe to her I would have abandoned you. But I know that she has no reason to complain of you; she is prejudiced by a cabal which I shall dissolve. Contrive to serve me as you have hitherto done, and I will secure you against all the intrigues of your enemies.'

Richelieu was definitely saved, and saved by the will of the King.

A Council was held immediately. Marillac was deprived of the seals, and was exiled. His brother, the Marshal de Marillac, who was a grave danger because he was at the head of important forces, was ordered for arrest, and the duty of executing the order was given to Schomberg. All this information was brought to Marie de Medici: it was like a block falling upon her and crushing her. She was left dazed, undone, gasping, stammering vague abuse, groaning, sobbing, then again inert, trying to understand, trying to persuade herself, not knowing what to do. It was the most terrible affront which she had ever suffered, the finish of her political role, an annihilating insult, which sanctioned, by the will of this stupid or criminal son, the execrable audacity of a valet! Around her stretched a desert, a vast silence. All those who the day before were pushing themselves forward, were now dispersing, terrified, having but one hope—that none had observed them, that

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

none had noticed them in the presence of the disgraced Queen.

But this indomitable creature could not resign herself to defeat: it was impossible for her to admit that her son could escape her. More mother than queen—and a tyrannical mother at that—she could never understand that a king might have inhuman duties to perform. With fierce obstinacy, she pursued Louis XIII, she harassed him, sometimes offensively, sometimes tearfully, more often rebelliously. The scandal became so glaring and frequent that Louis XIII resolved to act. He confined her first in Compiègne, and prohibited her from returning to Paris; then, as she was still too near and was again intriguing, he resolved to give her a residence in Angers or Nevers. Her son Gaston, stirred up by her, was sent away along with her, after copiously insulting Richelieu; he had even raised some troops. From the provinces, he despatched to Paris letters and outrageous libels against the Cardinal: it was a continual appeal to public opinion. The Queen had a paid pamphleteer in her service, Mathieu de Morgues, an old servant of Richelieu, a scurrilous but extremely brilliant journalist. The government replied to these attacks in the *Mercure Français*, and from the beginning of 1631 in the *Gazette de France*, which became the official organ of the minister. But this controversy maintained the irritation, and it was necessary to put an end to it. On July 10 Louis XIII let his mother understand that he had had enough, and that she must change her attitude. Furious, she decided to take refuge in a frontier stronghold, deciding on the little town of La Capelle, set out . . . and on arrival found the gates closed. She then went to the Netherlands, where ended in melancholy exile this tumultuous life, the circumstances of which immeasurably sur-

passed the intelligence of the woman who submitted to them without dominating them, and tried to direct them without understanding them. 'The departure of the Queen-Mother and of Monsieur,' wrote Richelieu, 'was like a salutary purge, clearing the kingdom of the evils which threatened it, and those who fancied they could bring these two to do harm to the King, only brought them to the state of being incapable of such harm.'

In the following month, as if he had chosen it, at the moment when his mother had finally left him, to show that such was his will, and that it was he who had chosen, Louis XIII raised Richelieu's fief to a dukedom.

Such was the end, at least the apparent and momentary end, of this storm, which, at first indistinctly, and then in sudden rage, had thrown the Court into confusion. It was bound to have the most disastrous consequences for two of the personages caught in it. The Cardinal did not readily forgive those who were opposed to him; he was so convinced that his cause was bound up with that of France, that to him his enemies were offenders against the State. Once more it was necessary to force these generals and nobles, infatuated with their ancestors and their influence, to understand that the law was identical for all, and that the Cardinal prescribed it. For having tried to infringe it, the Marshal de Marillac and the Duc de Montmorency were now to suffer. The death of Marillac has often been cast up against Richelieu as unjustifiable cruelty. In fact, at first sight, he does not seem to have actually plotted against the Cardinal. All the same, he was less culpable than his brother, the former keeper of the seals, whom Richelieu allowed to die in prison and who was continually opposed to Richelieu. The true reason for his arrest the Marshal understood, and himself stated when he declared

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

to the other Marshals, Schomberg and the Duc de la Force, who had the painful duty of arresting him: 'My brother and I have always been servants of the Queen-Mother.'

From Foglizzo, near Turin, the Marshal was transferred to Verdun, and there awaited his sentence. The proceedings lasted for eighteen months, and it is well known that none of the usual rules of procedure was observed. The accusations were inconsistent. Richelieu, in his *Memoirs*, to which it is constantly necessary to have recourse—for if he did not write them directly, he inspired them, and doubtless often dictated them—insists at length on the arguments which justified the conviction. He charges Marillac with being unfitted by birth for the offices which he occupied: but this is no motive for capital punishment. He pretends that, in spite of many reprovais, Marillac was slack or incapable: still, his slackness and his incapacity could not have been very serious, or he would have been deprived of his command. He expatiates at greater length on the irregularities and malversations of which Marillac was guilty in the revictualling and upkeep of his troops. But we know well enough that, under the old regime, the management of money, on the part of the men in charge, was not conducted precisely according to the regulations. No minister could escape the reproach of confusing his own funds with those of the State; and Richelieu himself was not therein above blame. Marillac in his case, acted, neither more nor less dishonestly than the rest of his contemporaries. The truth is not to be found there, and we can easily see that Richelieu had neither the boldness nor the cynicism to say so. Marillac, at the close of these not very judicial proceedings, in which he was refused all the safeguards to which he was entitled,

RICHELIEU

was finally executed on May 10, 1632, because it was necessary to terrify by a brutal example all those at Court among whom rebellion was still fermenting. To strike down one who was guilty would have had neither the same significance nor the same importance. At this moment, and for several months previously, Gaston d'Orléans and the Queen-Mother were intriguing with the Governor of Calais. They had wished to make themselves masters of that town and to entrench themselves there, repeat the revolt of La Rochelle, and revive it with greater chance of success owing to the proximity of England.

Richelieu knew all this, for his secret service kept him informed of all that went on, even, it seemed, about the thoughts of his enemies. And this is why it was necessary for him to be pitiless, and give an impression of injustice and inhumanity; he acted in order to show those whose fidelity might waver that even innocence was no safeguard, and that there was no law in France for those who revolted against the King, or by their sympathies made common cause with factions. Motives are right, when they are motives of the State. The only reproach which one can level against Richelieu is that he had to seek justifications and pretexts.

Nevertheless, Marillac died magnificently, with a serenity and heroism which attested that Richelieu had known whom to choose, so that the horror of his death would terrify the irresolute and shock the bold.

The execution of Montmorency amplified the terror. Here, there is no doubt concerning the case, he was a traitor, at least according to Richelieu's conceptions, which are, on this point, identical with ours. But, for this nobility, insubordinate by temperament, the idea of fidelity to country, and even to the King, was not then powerful

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

enough to instil the notion of patriotism. Rebellion and revolt were considered in some way as the exercise of a right by men who had as yet no idea of national unity. For Richelieu, who made the establishment of this unity the work of his life, what they termed rebellion was treachery and *lèse-majesté*; but rare were those who understood him, and this incomprehension explains the accusations of cruelty, injustice, and odious misuse of illegal power, which his adversaries directed against him.

Henri de Montmorency, Governor of Languedoc, distant kinsman of Marie de Medici by his marriage with Marie Félicie des Ursins, was one of the most illustrious, brave, and charming amongst all the gentlemen of France. He was not by nature hostile towards Richelieu. On the contrary: when Louis XIII appeared to be dying at Lyons, and when his death would have delivered the Cardinal into his enemies' hands, Henri de Montmorency had offered him a refuge in his province. But he had allowed himself to be influenced by his wife, and, after the Day of Dupes, when Marie de Medici was exiled and Gaston d'Orléans had to flee, it was not by the side of the King, but beside his brother, that Montmorency ranged himself. This was a disastrous decision, for Gaston d'Orléans merited little sympathy, and still less confidence. Montmorency had accepted seriously the pretensions of Monsieur, who had crossed the frontier in June, 1632, and marched towards the Loire, shadowed by Schomberg and La Force. Montmorency, seeing him in difficulties, tried to raise Languedoc, and did not succeed; but with foolish temerity he went with some troops to join Gaston d'Orléans. On September 1, 1632, an engagement took place at Castelnaudary; the royal forces, much superior in numbers, routed their adversaries, and Henri de Montmorency,

severely wounded, was taken prisoner. Perhaps he hoped to obtain the Cardinal's pardon by recalling the letter which the latter had written to him the previous year: 'I implore you to believe that the affection with which I regard you is, and always will be, such that time cannot possibly alter on my part, being based on the good qualities which I perceive in you, and which make me hope that you will always be true to yourself.'

There is no reason to doubt Richelieu's sincerity when he wrote these words. His spirit was accessible to gratitude, enthusiastic for honour and resolute in fidelity. As a man, he could not but love Montmorency. But he was placed once more in circumstances which he had not willed—'It is not I who have struck the first blow,' he said to Madame de Guéménée—between his sentiments as a man and his duties as a minister. Whatever grief he might suffer secretly, he had no right not to be inflexible, and he was inflexible. When Gaston d'Orléans, after a shameful submission, had made a few timid overtures on his behalf, then without further perseverance had abandoned him to his fate, Montmorency, who was recovered from his wounds, awaited the decision of his judges. It was necessary that the sentence passed upon him should be commensurate with his station, which increased the enormity of his offence and the efficacy of the example. As Richelieu himself said: 'The present state of affairs has need of a great example.'

On October 30, scarcely recovered from his wounds, Montmorency was executed. Never has punishment stirred up such indignation and commiseration. All the nobility had petitioned and interceded for him. He inspired only sympathy, and had no enemies. Nobody considered him guilty. Nobody understood. Richelieu did what had to

THE HUNDRED-HEADED HYDRA

be done, and the King upheld him. Urged by those around him to have mercy on the condemned man, Louis XIII, in order to satisfy everybody, replied with one of the finest remarks he ever made, and which shows how far he had absorbed the ideal of his minister: 'I should not be King, if I had the feelings of private men.'

The death of the Duc de Montmorency marked the triumph of the Cardinal and the collapse of the nobility. He had struck and laid low a man who stood second only to the princes of the blood royal. Heroic and intelligent, repeatedly victorious, Montmorency represented an old lineage, with seven centuries behind it. He was young and well loved. Everything combined to make him a glorious symbol of French magnificence. By beheading this man Richelieu made affirmation of the superhuman character of the monarchical principle.

CHAPTER X

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

THE immensity of the work accomplished by Richelieu, the prodigious diversity of a force seeming to take no account of time nor of human strength, attract the attention of historians so powerfully that they end by neglecting the man himself in favour of the diplomat, the general, the reconstructor of the kingdom, the dictator. True, one may assert that Richelieu's work matters more than his person, and that his private life offers only anecdotal interest. I believe, however, that we shall understand him better if we try to take a more intimate view of him, and to show him as he appeared to his contemporaries in the ordinary daily course of his life.

We have the good fortune to be better informed about this side of him than is usual in the lives of historical personages. A scholar to whose work we must render homage, Maximin Deloche, has spent several years in bringing to light all the public papers, letters, recollections, accounts, official reports, military or judicial, which can furnish any exact information on the Cardinal's private life. But, above all, he has had the good fortune to discover a document of exceptional interest: *The Register for the Year 1639 of the Expenses of the Household of Monseigneur the Cardinal, Duc de Richelieu*. It is a register in folio, of sixty-four sheets of strong paper, bound in parchment, and signed by Richelieu. The possession of this text, together with the mass of documents which he has discovered in the

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

papers of the period, has permitted Maximin Deloche to write an extraordinarily interesting book,¹ which Richelieu's biographers have no doubt read, but have rarely quoted; and from which we borrow, for it alone can provide us with the material necessary for the present chapter.

We have seen that in his *Memoirs*, in several places, Richelieu replies to those who reproach him for his avarice and his scandalous aggrandisement. We know also that during the siege of La Rochelle he several times advanced considerable sums to the State, and besides that he kept for his safety a guard which at first numbered thirty men, was increased to fifty after the Day of Dupes, and to a hundred and fifty during the last six years of his life. Finally, contemporaries have very often asserted that the grandeur of his house surpassed that of the royal palace, to such a point even, that Louis XIII, much more simple and economical, sometimes took offence. Whilst we also know that, originally, Richelieu's fortune was but a meagre one, and that, in his bishopric of Luçon, he often complained of his inability to maintain the status of a gentleman, it must be admitted that he owed his wealth to his position, which brought him one of the largest revenues in the kingdom. Of this revenue, the register for 1639 gives us a good idea, particularly if we convert into current francs the sums given in *livres*. This estimate, unfortunately, can only be approximate. Specialists agree that the intrinsic value of the *livre*, that is to say its weight in silver, was equal to ten francs (the franc of to-day corresponding to twenty centimes of gold). But, taking into consideration the commercial value of certain current commodities, this *livre*, intrinsically equal to ten francs, had a higher purchasing

¹ Maximin Deloche : *La Maison du Cardinal de Richelieu*. Champion, Paris, 1912.

RICHELIEU

power, so much so that it has sometimes been valued at forty, and even at sixty, francs. It would seem, however, that these estimates are excessive, and can only be justified occasionally, for certain products, and in special circumstances. To obtain an average amongst all the elements of appreciation at our disposal, we can obtain a sensible and more or less exact estimate by fixing the purchasing power of the *livre* at twenty francs of to-day. It is on this basis that we shall work, for it is certain that Richelieu's receipts and expenses have a much more impressive significance for us when we read them as being in modern currency.

Of what nature were the Cardinal's revenues? We should know this without question if the register for 1639 had not been mutilated: fourteen sheets are unfortunately missing (the original register contained seventy-eight), and these contained the receipts. But he himself tells us that, when he arrived at the ministry, he had a revenue of 25,000 *livres* in benefices (500,000 francs), and an equal sum which came to him on the death of his brother, making a total of one million. Besides, the King also gave him six abbeys, whose revenues cannot be estimated; but they were considerable. If we note also that he possessed a rich farm in Normandy, and that it produced for him 50,000 *livres* (one million francs), and a rental of 60,000 *livres* from his five extensive farms in France (1,200,000 francs), we shall find there the chief base on which to estimate the fixed revenues under his charge. For the rest, his will, which we give as an appendix,¹ is on this subject the most eloquent of texts.

We also know that the customs of the period, altogether different from ours, allowed a chief minister, likewise a

¹ See page 285.

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

comptroller of finance and every great personage holding high office, a personal commission on all the sums that he received. What we call a 'rake-off,' and which we condemn officially, was then regarded as a rightful perquisite. Some of these perquisites the Cardinal rightly refused; for example, 100,000 *livres* which were offered to him by financiers after the conclusion of a contract with the State, and 200,000 *livres* which represented his share of the proceeds, in his capacity as admiral, on the vessels wrecked in the Bay of Biscay. His refusal was by no means a gesture of honest indignation, for, we repeat, he had the right to accept; and it is likely that in many other circumstances he did in fact accept. But he had the tact to know to refuse sometimes, and we can find in similar disclaimers successful rejoinders to the voice of scandal.

If we have not the exact and complete record of his revenues, we possess, as we have indicated above, the minutest statement of his expenditure for one year, and, expenditure being less than revenue (the fortune which he left to his heirs proves this abundantly), we can form a sufficiently clear idea of the sums that passed annually through his hands.

The register for 1639, drawn up, as a note in manuscript indicates, to be placed in the record-office of Monseigneur, is divided into two parts. The first shows, for each month, the details of all expenses arranged monthly under six heads:

Ordinary household expenditure.

Increase in the above-mentioned expenditure.

Ordinary expenditure for the Great Stable.

Ordinary expenditure for the Lesser Stable.

Ordinary expenditure for the payment of two companies.

Petty expenses of the month.

RICHELIEU

The second part is devoted to various expenditures enumerated under six heads, to the annual receipts in detail, then to the financial machinery by which the Cardinal was able to pay back to his central office the sums borrowed when revenues were momentarily insufficient.

We need not give here the account of all the expenses for each month of the year: those who wish to know this will find it without difficulty in the document itself. It will suffice us, in order to make clear the state and importance of a cardinal's establishment, and show the amount required to maintain it, to give Richelieu's expenditure for March, which is almost exactly the average between December, the heaviest month of all, and September, the least costly.

The first table gives us the ordinary household expenditure, arranged according to the various items. Here are the prices for March, 1639. (We must remember to multiply these figures by twenty at least, to convert them into current franc values.)

Meat and fish	.	.	.	.	9,470 <i>l.</i>
Light	.	.	.	.	210 <i>l.</i>
Bread	.	.	.	.	887 <i>l.</i>
Flour	.	.	.	.	60 <i>l.</i>
Wood and charcoal	.	.	.	.	1,133 <i>l.</i>
Fruit	.	.	.	.	1,094 <i>l.</i>
Petty supplies	.	.	.	.	372 <i>l.</i>
Eggs and cream	.	.	.	.	175 <i>l.</i>
Pastry	.	.	.	.	81 <i>l.</i>
Candlesticks, candles	.	.	.	.	210 <i>l.</i>
Oranges and lemons	.	.	.	.	97 <i>l.</i>
Washing	.	.	.	.	100 <i>l.</i>

Altogether, his ordinary household expenditure for a month cost Richelieu 15,402 *livres*. Convert this into

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

current values and we have the imposing figure of 308,000 francs in round numbers, that is to say 3,696,000 francs per annum. We are far from the period when the young Bishop of Luçon was complaining of his poverty, hesitating to buy a few pieces of silver plate, and having the sacerdotal garments of his predecessor altered to fit him.

The second table informs us of the increase in the ordinary household expenditure, on these various items, caused by ceremonial banquets and receptions. Here they are in detail:

Meat and fish	. . . . .	1,031 l.
Light	. . . . .	78 l.
Bread	. . . . .	128 l.
Wine	. . . . .	962 l.
Wood and charcoal	. . . . .	325 l.
Candlesticks and candles	. . . . .	52 l.

Altogether, this increase amounts to 2,578 *livres*, that is, 51,560 francs to-day, and 618,000 francs for the year. If we now add to this the ordinary household expenditure, we stand pensive before a total which is not far short of five million francs.

The third and fourth tables concern the Great and the Lesser Stable. The Great Stable contained the blood-stock, the war horses, noble beasts skilfully trained; it employed a personnel of seventeen pages and ten grooms for some thirty animals. The Lesser Stable housed the ordinary saddle-horses, trace-horses, hacks and mules, with the carriages, coaches, litters, and baggage-wagons. It employed thirteen pages, six footmen, thirty-three coachmen, muleteers, postilions, and grooms, serving seventy-two saddle-horses, sixteen carriage-horses and hacks, and sixteen mules. Here is the expenditure on these,

RICHELIEU

which was controlled by the Seneschal. Let us consider the Great Stable first:

For the maintenance of the pages	. 1,050 l.	18s.
For the maintenance of the horses	. 873 l.	18s.
For the pages' footgear and washing	76 l.	16s.
For the grooms' wages	. . . . .	217 l.

Altogether, 2,218 *livres* 12 *sols*, that is to say, 44,360 current francs, and, per annum, 532,000 francs.

Let us turn to the Lesser Stable. Here we are shown the following particulars, all mentioned strictly in order:

Maintenance of beasts belonging to the house	. . . . .	2,016 l.	18s.
Maintenance of horses belonging to visitors and guests	. . . . .	431 l.	4s.
For the hire of sixteen horses and sixteen mules	. . . . .	1,364 l.	
Straw for the carriages and the wages of postilions, muleteers, grooms, and others	686 l.	8s.	
For the pages' footgear and washing	. 62 l.	8s.	
For the footgear and washing of His Eminence's footmen	. . . . .	40 l.	

Altogether, 4,212 *livres* 18 *sols*, that is to say, 84,240 current francs, and, annually, a little more than a million, which, added to the expenditure on the Great Stable, brings the total amount of these items to more than 1,500,000 francs per annum.

The Cardinal's residence was divided into a civil household and a military household. The latter contained a hundred and seven horse guards, a hundred musketeers of the old company, and thirty-eight recruits, that is to say, two hundred and forty-five men, including officers. The

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

fifth table is devoted to this head, bringing the expenditure on the monthly items to 8,380 *livres*, that is, 167,000 francs of our money, a little more than 2,000,000 per annum.

Finally, the petty expenses, which represent the casual and the unforeseen, amount to 676 *livres*, that is to say, for the year, to a sum of approximately 160,000 francs. Altogether, adding this sum to the total of the tables comprising the ordinary expenditure, we arrive at a total annual sum of 370,326 *livres*, that is, in round figures, 7,500,000 francs.

But to these regular expenses must be added those items, so interesting to read in detail, which belong to less constant expenditure. These are, without analysing them minutely:

Alms, gifts and pensions	.	.	.	27,424 <i>l.</i>
Physicians and surgeons	.	.	.	6,042 <i>l.</i>
Servants' clothing	.	.	.	11,578 <i>l.</i>
Pages' services	.	.	.	3,490 <i>l.</i>
Furniture (purchase and maintenance)	.	.	.	13,144 <i>l.</i>
The stables (maintenance)	.	.	.	12,322 <i>l.</i>
Various petty repairs	.	.	.	5,392 <i>l.</i>
Wages	.	.	.	15,711 <i>l.</i>
Expenses of various sorts	.	.	.	7,230 <i>l.</i>
Special expenses	.	.	.	21,811 <i>l.</i>

The round figure of these ten items amounts to 124,149 *livres*, that is to say, to nearly 2,500,000 francs. Let us now add this sum to the total of the ordinary expenditure, and we ascertain finally that Richelieu spent ten millions each year on the upkeep of his household.

His revenues, we know, were at least double his expenses. But Richelieu was not obliged to capitalise: he willingly sunk his fortune in landed properties. The two most important were his castle at Ruel, and the Palais Cardinal. The building of the latter, including the re-

RICHELIEU

adjustment of various constructions, begun in 1624, was not completed until 1641. As for Ruel, the Cardinal obtained possession of it in 1633, and the work he expended on it was so considerable that, with the exception of one room which he used, he was unable to occupy it: the improvements were not even completed at his death. He stayed there often, however, and lived simply at one of his farms. He had no love for his birthplace nor nostalgia for the places where his childhood was passed. It is true that he restored, extended and reconstructed the ancestral domain, the château of Richelieu, where he had lived for so many years; and on it he spent such sums that the pamphleteers of the time, who did not spare him, stigmatised his unparalleled ostentation. But he did not work for himself, having no desire to return there to live. His only desire was to enhance the dignity of his family, to bring honour to the line from which he himself had sprung; and for this purpose he spared nothing. Ruel was the abode which he preferred. We find in him, throughout his correspondence, a sentiment very rare at this period: the love of nature. Everywhere, at Luçon, at Richelieu, at Ruel finally, we see that he preferred above all the presence of trees; and not pruned trees, but deep forests and soaring, abundant foliage. Nevertheless, in the gardens, he delighted in those styles of architecture which Versailles, a little later, brought to their classical perfection. Levelling of the ground, plantations, stairs, cascades, cost him at least 336,000 *livres* (almost seven million francs), while the cost of the buildings did not exceed 410,000 *livres* (8,200,000 francs).

Even more than trees, he loved the gleam of water and its play on the verdure. He spent 60,000 *livres* (1,200,000 francs) to establish at Ruel the conduits and

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

reservoirs which fed its water-jets and ponds; and, at Richelieu, there was a veritable apotheosis of running and spouting waters: everywhere cascades, fountains, jets, ponds, conduits, with a permanent arrangement for the irrigation of the stables and the courtyards.

When building or gardening operations were being discussed, the Cardinal decided everything himself, and his gardener, Jean Maignan, and his architect, Le Mercier, held veritable councils with him. Has he not given his name to a variety of tulips—violet and white—and was it not he who introduced into France, to surround his great pond, those tall strong chestnuts from India which later were called Cardinals? Finally, no orangery was ever so rich, or so well tended and productive, as Richelieu's: to whatever purpose he applied himself, however futile, it must be accomplished, and it was accomplished. The plants from Frontignan, which he succeeded in acclimatising at Ruel, provided him with a creditable wine, which he did not scorn to put on the market; and there was no more delicate flattery for a courtier than to be able to buy from Monseigneur the Cardinal a hogshhead of his nectar.

At Ruel, whenever he had a few days' leisure, or when-
ever illness—alas, too frequent—compelled him to rest, Richelieu became a private gentleman, and, if he could never forget the weight of his responsibilities (he was Minister for Foreign Affairs, for the Interior, for War, for the Navy, and President of the Council), he could at least relax, and escape that life of pomp and ceremony which was imposed on him in Paris. But these moments he could not prolong: he must return. The Louvre had need of him, the King claimed him: his life was not his own.

We know what his life was: a continuous servitude,

RICHELIEU

which never allowed him the pleasures of meditation and of solitude. A regular court accompanied him. First of all there was, as with the King, the master of the chamber, the chief officer of a cardinal's household, who was at the same time master of ceremonies and the prelate's representative during his absence; he also filled the office of grand almoner and had charge of the general administration of the palace. Alongside the master of the chamber was the confessor: the first one was the Abbé Mulet, a doctor of the Sorbonne, whose rude candour greatly amused Richelieu and Father Joseph, and whom nothing could soften but the sight of a brimming tankard in front of him. But he did not remain long in charge; Richelieu changed his confessor three times, and we have proof that, if he never governed his politics by his religion, he practised his religious duties regularly, rising every night about two, to worship in the company of his master of the chamber, some officers of his guard, and his valets. Sometimes he returned to bed, but more often he sat down to work, and heard, at his usual rising hour, the morning Mass. He himself officiated on feast days, and every Sunday received the Sacrament.

His civil household required a certain number of secretaries. There was no eminent personage amongst these. It is clear that Richelieu did not require them to collaborate with him: there was no need. Father Joseph, with his encyclopædic knowledge, his ingenious and subtle mind, his combativeness, sufficed him, and offered him, besides, a devotion and an impenetrable security. The secretaries were simply good workmen, 'transcribers,' as he called them. All they needed was talent sufficient to write out his speeches and letters. Of these subordinates, one only, by his intelligence and his faithfulness, deserves

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

that his name should survive: he is Michel le Masle, Prior of Roches, who, towards 1600, was already the *petit valet* of Armand du Plessis, and who, for many years, was his personal household servant. In reality, le Masle was a great deal more than a secretary, he was the Cardinal's factotum, worthy of such confidence that Richelieu during his absences entrusted him with the management of his revenues, and lodged with him a sum of 1,500,000 *livres* in cash (30,000,000 francs) for the security of the State in case of urgent need. The other secretaries, Charpentier, Gaudin, De Loynes, remained in the shade and prospered quietly. Their situation was no sinecure. After his first sleep, and when he had performed his devotions, Richelieu usually began to work, and dictated until almost six in the morning. He then went back to bed, to rise between seven and eight, when he immediately called for his secretaries. But very often the Cardinal reduced his hours of sleep: the days were not long enough, he could not lose any part of them. Besides, during the day, his interviews with the King and with all the great personages of the kingdom, councils, private meetings, the social round also, from which he could not altogether stand aside, left him without the quiet necessary for thought, especially these hours of meditation and silence in which it was possible for him to make plans and to study the problems which he had to resolve. Fever helped him to carry on without sleep. Perpetually ill, and suffering cruelly, he made up his mind to allow neither illness nor pain to dispirit him, and to be master of his body. Also, he had beside him a night secretary who slept in his room and replaced his colleagues during the rare moments when the master allowed them to sleep. But this secretary was also a nurse, who, every night, when Richelieu woke from his first sleep,

which was always disturbed by nightmares, gave him the attention necessary for his condition: he was corroded with anal ulcerations, suppurating sores which burned and tormented him; all his life he bore this terrible affliction, which grew worse year after year. He could be relieved only by soothing balsams, dressings, baths; and the secretary-nurse had charge of this task. The hideous hidden side of a prodigious life! . . . The table beside the bed held a cardinal's hat, the insignia of his dignity, the Minister's portfolio and *escritoire*, bands, compresses, lint, ointments, the case, the syringe, the surgical instruments: left in the hands of his nurses, docile and passive, Richelieu never interrupted his work. He is one of the most moving and magnificent examples of what moral strength can exact from a wasted body.

By his letters, and by the number of contemporary accounts, we can truthfully say that never was health more unsound. As early as 1611, as the result of a fever lasting for six months, he found himself obliged to travel in a litter, and, during the rest of the year, was confined to his bishopric, so weak that another year passed before his health was relatively restored. In 1621 began the particular malady which made his life a veritable martyrdom. Every year he suffered fresh attacks, bouts of fever or a new outbreak of hæmorrhoids and ulcers. At the beginning of 1632 a stricture of the urinal passage intruded; it was necessary to probe it. In 1634 he began to suffer from rheumatism and toothache; as for headaches and facial neuralgia, he was their victim, as he himself said, almost from adolescence. When he wished to travel he was obliged to use the litter. When he rested, he could, with certain precautions, remain seated. But the movements of a coach, displacing his body and disarranging his cushions,

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

caused him intolerable suffering: he could not travel in this way unless he lay stretched out on his side. He tried, in order to preserve his personal dignity, and also perhaps to withhold pleasure from his enemies, to make light of his infirmities or at least to disguise their nature. He did not succeed. Nothing remained secret of his life, nor of his trials. The cruellest and most intent of his pamphleteers, Mathieu de Morgues, apostrophised him with a cruelty which set the red-hot brand on the tenderest spot, in his celebrated *Remonstrance de Caton Chrestien*: 'How can you hear the instructions of the book of God, when you have closed your ears entirely to the voice of nature, which warns you daily, through your infirmities and through the frequent remedies which you take, concerning what you are and what you are not? It is no valet who cries to you every morning, as they cried to the King of Persia: "Remember that you are a man!" The headaches, the ardours of the blood, these lively excitements which possess you, the syringes, the lancets and the baths, warn you not only that you are mortal but that you hold life in your keeping under onerous conditions.'

The state of his health, always threatened, always declining, explains why the Cardinal retained, attached to his household on a permanent footing, a physician, an apothecary and a surgeon.

Richelieu's military household contained, in the first rank, six equerries, who, with the gentlemen servants, represented the nobility. Their essential role was to attend to his horses and his personal equipage, without interfering with the duties of the grooms. The gentlemen servants constituted the escort and immediate entourage of the Minister: no obligation or particular duty was imposed

upon them; they formed a court, the sort of household *de luxe* which belonged only to princes and dukes. The lustre which these courtiers brought to the Minister's household was enhanced by the pages. Of these he had twenty attached to the Great Stable, and thirteen to the Lesser Stable. Maintained, but receiving no pay, they were gentlemen's sons serving their apprenticeship as gentlemen, learning how to ride, how to fence, how to handle a musket, how to command. To this end, from the age of eleven or thereabouts, they passed two or three preparatory years in the Lesser Stable, and then moved on to the Great Stable, where they became fully qualified. Their service alongside their master was designed specifically for display: they formed a second court below the gentlemen servants, sometimes a little noisy, although discipline was strict; Richelieu loved their gaiety and tolerated their pleasantries. He utilised them with a keen eye for decorative effect: torch-bearers in processions, servers of light dainties to guests at festivals and collations, always sumptuously dressed, and in a costume exactly adapted to the circumstances, they also followed the Cardinal to war; and when, with cuirass and plumed hat, he reviewed the troops, two pages mounted on magnificent horses galloped before him, carrying his gloves and helmet, while, on his right and on his left, two other mounted pages led by the bridle two of his most beautiful chargers.

Finally, in this hierarchy of human beings dedicated to the service of the Minister and destined to strengthen the impression of sovereignty which he sought to produce, the company of guards and musketeers formed a general effect of such power and wealth that Richelieu was accused of trying to eclipse the power and splendour of the King himself. A hundred horse guards, a hundred foot guards,

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

and fifty recruits in training, specially equipped, a body of private officers, made up a force very rare at this period. It was in 1636 that Richelieu began to organise this picked force, but he then had only thirty men. Anxiety for his safety, the consciousness, more and more intense, of his grandeur and what it necessitated, made him quickly augment the number; he formed then, to begin with, his company of horse guards, and then, a few years later, his musketeers. At no moment did the captain of the guard leave the Cardinal. During the night he slept in an adjoining room, wherever Richelieu's momentary domicile might be. In the daytime he remained the whole time in the same apartment, by the side of the bed if the Cardinal had to lie down ill; and whenever an important or confidential call necessitated his removal out of earshot, he stuck close to the door, ready to spring in case of need. Before anyone could be admitted to Richelieu's presence, it was necessary to pass through five groups of guards: magnificent soldiers, clad in scarlet coats embroidered with gold, silver and silk. In the last ante-chamber, sentries stood by their arms, relieved every hour, their weapons primed and ready to fire. On all occasions Richelieu was escorted by his guards, who were widely known, and accompanied him even to religious ceremonies. The celebrated preacher, François Ogier, who had the honour to preach before him, has left a suggestive account of this solemn occasion, which once more shows us this sense of decorative effect which we have mentioned above: 'The aspect of the place, which was not a church, was very strange to me. A hedge of muskets formed an empty frame and a space as large between the chair of the preacher and that of the Cardinal. The latter, placed on a platform, was more like a throne than an ordinary seat, round

RICHELIEU

which crowded the dukes and peers and secretaries of State. . . . Happy the cavalier of his Order who could lean on the back of his chair, while his captain was busy elsewhere! In fact, it was he himself who conducted me to my place and introduced me to the chair. A beadle so qualified embarrassed me. My surplice got caught on a soldier's weapon. The stinging smell of tinder and powder was for me a disagreeable and unaccustomed perfume.'

We see from this account that a truly royal pomp attended all the public circumstances of the Minister's life. Even in his own house the ceremonial was no less minute or fastidious.

Richelieu had five valets, whose duties were strictly personal. The first of these, Desbournais, entered his service whilst he was studying in Paris: a trustworthy man, he acted as an agent or a courier on occasion. The others attended to the wardrobe, to finding places for the mules and pack-horses when travelling, to the Cardinal's beard and linen—in short, to all the small matters of daily routine, wherever they happened to be. But above these were the actual administrators of the household, the steward, the comptroller, the paymaster. The steward kept a firm hold on the domestic personnel; he regulated expenses with the minutest precision: whatever was necessary for the house, provisions, kitchen necessities, were under his control, as also was the ceremonial of the table.

The importance of a household retinue, with the Cardinal, had obliged him to create a veritable triumvirate, although, with most of the great lords of the period, the steward alone sufficed. With Richelieu the duties were shared by the comptroller and the paymaster. The first verified the delivery of goods, their quality and weight, while the second negotiated with merchants and attended

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

to the payment. We have seen by the register for 1639 that these payments were by no means mediocre, and that, for the normal daily routine of the household as well as for exceptional occasions, it was a sum of several millions that these three servitors administered annually.

Banquets apart, the Cardinal's table was ordinarily one of fourteen covers; his guests were the most distinguished persons in the kingdom, and to be honoured by an invitation to dinner (that is to say, to luncheon) by the Cardinal was certainly more valued, and more intimidating, than an invitation to dine with the King. The meal, according to the exacting custom of the times, was one of three courses, and each course contained a principal dish, two accessory dishes (meat, vegetables, and garnishings), six *petits plats* (gastronomical whims more subtle still) and six *assiettes*, which held what are termed 'kickshaws.' Dessert was always a work of art, in which the steward and his assistants gave full rein to their creative powers and to the caprices of their fancy.

Richelieu, whose natural abstemiousness was increased by the state of his health, scarcely touched anything that was placed before him, and contented himself with watching his guests eat: this was the symbol of his whole life. The more closely one examines it, the more one becomes convinced that it was void of all personal satisfaction: a mind afire in a feeble body, a unique spirit dedicated to the triumph of an idea. Richelieu never relaxed, except in rare moments when he felt absolutely obliged to do so, and the only occupations which could sometimes distract him were poetry, particularly dramatic poetry, and music. For music, as he said himself, he had a particular inclination. But he also admitted that he never had time to listen

to it, except perhaps a dozen times a year. He had also, but intermittently, some notions for playing the flute, and got as far as practising, in the company of Marie de Medici. But he never strove to become accomplished. He kept a salaried singer for the skill with which she sang Italian melodies, and retained a dozen musicians. This was a taste which he shared with Louis XIII. Invalids both, entertaining each other with their reciprocal maladies, equally sensitive to the enchantment of sound, was it not this which brought them together and formed between them, in place of tenderness, the sort of spiritual intimacy which is the first condition of friendship? It was not, doubtless, with the Cardinal a passion so deep and pervading as with Louis XIII, who composed, and who has left us a song for four voices, very harmonious, with delightful inflections; but in music, when he could spare a few minutes, he found a means to escape from himself. He had very few opportunities. . . . We know that he likewise loved the theatre, and interested himself directly in technical discussions, such as that of the dramatic unities, or the famous dispute over *Le Cid*.

Did he write, as some have pretended? Did he not rather suggest subjects, and draw up roughly the plan of the work, leaving the writing to authors in his pay? The second hypothesis is infinitely more likely than the first. It is ridiculous to pretend that, in a sick life, and when his mind was always fully occupied with grave problems, Richelieu was able to amuse himself for long in the role of dramatic author. He was curious about literature because his penetrative mind was interested in all forms of activity, and because he felt how important letters and the arts were for the prestige of the king-

THE CARDINAL'S PRIVATE LIFE

dom and for the enrichment of the mind. But he had too much to do to dedicate his time to these; and all that can be said on this subject rests on vague anecdotes, generally malevolent. Their assertions must leave us sceptical.

CHAPTER XI

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

ONE of the most remarkable traits in Richelieu's genius might be defined as his gift for ubiquity, or simultaneity. To be able to explain with any clearness his projects, his negotiations, his realisations, we are obliged to isolate them, analyse them, extract them from the compact and confused mass formed by their inextricable medley, and to follow, from period to period, their particular development. Because it obeys the laws of language and of discursive thought, historical narration is necessarily a sort of musical progression. We cannot develop several lines simultaneously. Now, Richelieu's life, with the extreme complexity of the internal and external problems which he studied and resolved all at one time, is a harmony of astounding richness. He always plays, and in even time, on several keyboards: to be able to follow the proceedings of his genius, we are forced to decompose its magnificent harmonies, those harmonies where the most daring touches suddenly appear, and especially this fundamental dissonance which he himself has created: the defence of Catholicism against Protestantism within the kingdom of France, and the struggle against Catholicism, with the Protestant alliance, in the rest of Europe.

We have seen him, on the Day of Dupes, on the point of being expelled, and fully believing himself that this had happened, by the coterie which gravitated around Marie

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

de Medici and Gaston, the vain and incapable craven who was her favourite son. After the Cardinal's victory, in the resultant confusion which stirred the Court like a cyclone or a volcanic eruption, we have seen Richelieu follow the logical consequences of events, by imparting to all the rebels, and to all the nobility, two tragic warnings: the execution of Marillac and that of Montmorency. But, previously, when from one day to the next he never knew when he might have to abandon everything and take to flight, he was working, with lucidity and an inexhaustible application, on the administrative reorganisation of France and, in external affairs, was busying himself with the map of Europe, searching for any perceptible points which would allow him, if not to kill, at least to wound and subdue to his will this Catholic colossus with the grasping ambitions which the empire had produced, along with its chief, Ferdinand II.

The affairs of Valtellina and of the duchy of Montferrat, which were concluded so advantageously for France, nevertheless realised but an insignificant part of the design which Richelieu had conceived. To be sure, he had—and this was not a negligible performance—broken the net which Spain and Austria had stretched around France, and so well had he torn the meshes that the solution of continuity was final. But he had not broken the empire, he had not even impaired it. Now, all his work, that which he has already accomplished, that which he still carries out every day, tends to provide France with the internal and external forces which she requires to establish her hegemony. In front of her, against her, is drawn up the House of Austria, Catholic herself also, and who, to this designation, wishes to lead Europe. Richelieu consecrated the last ten years of his life to repulsing the endeavours of

RICHELIEU

Austria, to breaking them, to giving his own country supremacy.

The task was clearly difficult and hazardous to carry out. In 1629 the Emperor Ferdinand II was at the height of his power. He had conquered Denmark, he had reduced the Palatine to his will, all the Electors had been subdued by him, and he had the magnificent army of Wallenstein to rely upon. Haughty, mystically proud of his imperial dignity, and capable, in an excessive degree, of conceiving an idealistic policy in his principles and very realistic in their applications, Ferdinand II wished to make the whole of Germany, reunited to Austria, or under his domination, an immense Catholic empire, at the head of which he would have been placed. At the time when Richelieu, a more artful and better schemer, was acting indulgently towards the Reformers that he had conquered, Ferdinand II was intent on persecuting them. In 1630, by the Decree of Restitution, he took back by force, from all those who had benefited from them since 1552, the ecclesiastical lands which they had then occupied, that is to say, a hundred abbeys and a dozen bishoprics.

This violent measure had naturally provoked the anger of all Huguenots, whatever their nationality might be. As always happens in the case of minorities, they felt themselves closely bound by mutual interests, and the feeling of being persecuted whetted the fanaticism inherent in these informal creeds, which replace the rigour of dogmas with spiritual inflexibility. It was, then, once more, to the Protestant states that Richelieu turned in order to stir up enemies against the House of Austria; the adversary was too strong to be attacked directly; and, at first, he sought to turn him aside, to make him strike obliquely by some pretence at aggression, then, when the stratagem had

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

proved successful, to act in his turn, if the situation permitted him.

The hired bully who was needed was well known to Richelieu: he was Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden. He had been told all about him at the siege of La Rochelle, by Hercule Girard, Baron de Charnacé, a great traveller, half-diplomat, half-adventurer, an expert at business and in judging men. Gustavus Adolphus had fascinated him. He was, he told the Cardinal, a 'new sun' that had risen, and he told him the romantic story of the prince. Son of Charles of Suderman, who had ousted from the throne his nephew Sigismond Vasa, the legitimate heir and a Catholic, in order to possess it for himself and to place a Lutheran dynasty at the head of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus, King for sixteen years, had never ceased to carry on war. He had fought against Russia, he had fought against Poland, he had extended the Swedish domination on the Baltic coasts. Impetuous and heroic, uniting the conceptions of a great general with the rashness of a soldier, only fully alive with the smell of powder in his nostrils and the din of battle in his ears, he was one of those leaders who make fanatics of their men, and whose very presence seems to bring victory. Besides, he was sadly in need of money, and Richelieu, less enthusiastic than Charnacé, but seeing which side of this sovereign, whom he regarded as little better than a troop leader, one would have to approach, resolved to win him over. As a Protestant, Gustavus Adolphus hated Austria. He knew, moreover, that if she were allowed to attain her ambitions, she would attack all the little states, and that Sweden, particularly, would suffer the fate of Denmark. The moment was perhaps ripe for barring the way, if one could. To wait was dangerous: soon, perhaps, it would be too late.

Thus the secret designs of Richelieu and the restless thoughts of Gustavus Adolphus were joined. The Cardinal was resolved to pay dearly, the King of Sweden decided to pay still more dearly: the operation must succeed.

But, first of all, it was necessary to free Gustavus Adolphus from the war that he was about to wage against his cousin Sigismond: Richelieu sent Charnacé to him, after having studied the problem for a long time with Father Joseph. The capuchin was in agreement with him: Catholic France must have pre-eminence over Catholic Austria. But Father Joseph had wished—and doubtless it was a difficult wish to realise—to enfeeble Austria without enfeebling the Catholic doctrine, and to utilise the Protestant alliance without fortifying the Reformation. It seems that he had vaguely foreseen the danger that would result for Europe, through the crushing of the House of Austria, and through the supremacy of Protestant countries. Richelieu, who had nothing in view but the immediate glory of France, and who, on this precise point, had not gone so far as his associate, acted without caring about distant consequences. He carried on, determined to deliver a decisive blow, and Father Joseph sought to restrain him, trying to establish a connection, perhaps impossible to determine, between the blow to Austria as an empire, and the influence she exerted as a religious personage.

Charnacé, after much discussion, ended by reconciling Sigismond and Gustavus Adolphus: this was the truce of Altmark, in September, 1629.

After that, he set to work to make the King of Sweden accept Richelieu's projects. The negotiation was long and not without anxiety. The King of Sweden was infatuated with himself and with his military talents. He believed

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

himself invincible, and, boisterous, ruddy, athletic, with the manners of a trooper let loose, a little given to drink, on the border-line of genius and of madness, he was by no means easy to handle. In order to win him over, to make sure of him, it was necessary as a practical measure to increase considerably the purchase-price. The alliance was at length concluded; Gustavus Adolphus, with his customary haste, raised a powerful army and, on July 4, 1630, he disembarked on the island of Usedom, facing the Pomeranian hills, while Wallenstein, at the head of the imperial army, besieged Stralsund. As early as July 20 he took Stettin, which furnished him with a stronghold, and his troops, continuing their march during the autumn and winter, proved their superiority. In the following spring the operations were renewed more strenuously than ever. On September 17, 1631, at Breitenfeld, near Leipzig, the Swedish army met the great army commanded by Tilly, which comprised the pick of the imperial forces. The Swedish army rose to marvellous heights of courage, resolution and daring. The imperial army was crushed, and Gustavus Adolphus, intoxicated by his success, was already forming a confused dream of European domination; he would descend on the Rhine, in an irresistible advance, and he would take Spire, Worms, Mayence—and be henceforth master of all Germany. Then he conceived a new project: when the House of Austria was subdued to his will, when Germany was in his power, why should he not set himself up as an emperor, why after that should he not replace the Catholic hegemony in the centre of Europe by a Protestant hegemony? . . . And, in this new scheme, allotting to France her legitimate place, if she wished to maintain it, he would offer her the left side of the Rhine entirely—the ancient Gaulish frontiers—and

RICHELIEU

the certainty of being finished at once with the perpetual wars stirred up by Austria and Spain.

This grandiose and disquieting proposal was carried in Council on January 6, 1632. Summed up, the operation had succeeded beyond the anticipations of the Cardinal; the hired assistant now aspired to a place on the highest plane, and was already within sight of it. An unexpected eventuality had taken place, which, two years earlier, would perhaps have seemed ludicrous. A decision must be made, and that swiftly.

For Richelieu this was one of the most distressing hours of his whole career. He found himself at a cross-roads, he had to decide which way he would turn. To accept the proposals of Gustavus Adolphus was obviously the way to procure peace. But at what price? . . . Eloquently and passionately Father Joseph pointed out to Richelieu the consequences of such a decision: the creation of a Protestant empire, which, one day, perhaps, would be even more dangerous than the House of Austria, because its Huguenot fanaticism, whose intransigence amounted to inhumanity, would turn against France. Surely the *status quo* was of greater value? . . . The Cardinal spent a whole night in considering the matter, composing and recomposing the ideal map of Europe, calling up the future, sometimes tempted to accept, and then remembering with a little shame that he was a Catholic, and that he had no right, for the triumph of a temporal policy, to deal his religion a mortal blow.

At dawn Richelieu sent for Father Joseph and made known his resolution. He did not wish to receive the left bank of the Rhine in exchange for the destruction of German Catholicism; and he ceased his payment to Gustavus Adolphus.

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

The latter was too intoxicated by his success to think of stopping. He threw his troops into Bohemia, and allowed them to pillage and massacre: this was not a war-like operation, it was the savage fury of Protestant hate let loose against a Catholic country.

The Emperor, then, raising a fresh army, and recalling Wallenstein, from whom he had previously been parted, renewed hostilities against the Swedes. The meeting between these two powerful hosts took place at Lutzen, and ended on the sixteenth of November 1632. After a furious battle the result appeared so indecisive that both armies chanted the *Te Deum*. But Gustavus Adolphus had been slain. The disappearance of this ally who had become dangerous was regarded by Richelieu as a deliverance. But the war, which would have been finished if he had accepted the proposals of Gustavus Adolphus, seemed likely to be perpetuated. It was a period of interminable negotiations and bargainings, of detailed discussions with all the petty princes of Germany in whom it was necessary to awaken sympathy with France. For the death of Gustavus Adolphus proved to be a victory for the Emperor, and if he seems to abandon his dream of a Catholic hegemony over the whole of Germany—he cannot carry it out: the Catholics themselves, alarmed by his megalomania, are turning away from him!—it is none the less true, from a political and a military standpoint, that he is stronger than ever; and Richelieu's project, the crushing of the House of Austria, is by no means realised. On the contrary, a series of events occurred which made the Cardinal realise that the moment was approaching when he must come into the open, renounce secret alliances and diplomatic intrigue, and throw upon the chess-board of Europe, not more ambassadors and negotiators, capuchins

RICHELIEU

though they might be, but armies. The Emperor Ferdinand received reinforcements, and these were none other than the redoubtable Spanish infantry. Elsewhere, the Protestant princes, on whom Richelieu had been relying up till then, were at the end of their resources: the imperial victory at Nordlingen had completely sapped their strength. When at length the Spanish army, in taking Treves in 1635, imprisoned the Elector, a protégé of the King of France, Richelieu decided for war. It was time: the Emperor was busy establishing treaties of neutrality or of friendship with nearly the whole of the Protestant princes; he could not but look forward to a treaty with Holland and Sweden also. Richelieu, in April 1635, concluded a pact with Oxenstiern, a pact very advantageous for Sweden and for Protestantism, but which assured the Cardinal of the military and political support which he needed.

On May 19, he sent a herald-at-arms formally to declare war against Spain; it was in Belgium, in these northern provinces occupied by the Spaniards, that this ceremony took place according to the ancient rites: the ride of the herald royal and the trumpeter, the call from the ramparts to demand an audience and, the audience having been refused, the throwing down of the gauntlet. France was henceforth engaged in a great European war.

This was, on the Cardinal's part, a grave decision, which might have ended in the ruin of all his work and in the irreparable destruction of the country he had raised so high. Richelieu, a remarkable general, possessing instinctively, rather than intellectually, acuteness for great strategical operations, was leaving nothing to chance in preparing and then launching himself resolutely into action. Richelieu, however, was not a military genius. No one knew better how to fight, or more skilfully, but he had

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

never cultivated the taste for battle, or never sought that intoxication of riot and risk which makes the true conqueror. Administrator and diplomat both, he was leaving nothing to circumstances beyond his foresight. In the war which he was entered upon, because the necessity of events compelled him to it, he did not feel absolutely sure of himself; the conflict had broken out prematurely: Richelieu was working to provide France with an army, but this is a long-drawn-out task, necessitating years of the minutest organisation, and he was far from having realised what he wished to accomplish. Now, he was not engaged in simple sieges, or in local expeditions, as had been those of Valtellina and Montferrat, or in pursuits across national territory against bands of rebels themselves even less organised than the pursuers. He was now engaged in a European war. For, if Richelieu had not declared war against Spain (she had furnished a pretext for him by molesting the Elector of Treves), it is evident that the Hapsburg of Austria, even if not directly provoked, would have struck in his turn, and would have chosen his own time for doing so. The struggle extended from the North Sea to the Alps, on a front the immensity of which can be compared to that of the last war. As for the adversary, it was the Spanish infantry then celebrated throughout the whole of Europe for its massive strength, its magnificent discipline, the machine-like infallibility of its thrust, the infantry which had assured the imperial victory at Nordlingen. Against this vigorous enemy, with the added strength of its invincible reputation, Richelieu risked the prestige of France and all his hopes of a hegemony, which he had the honesty to keep to himself, but which were not yet realised, and which a defeat would have destroyed. This was, for him, a period of feverish yet marvellously

lucid work. The die was cast, no recall was possible, he must cast his accounts and add them up afresh each day. Already terribly worn out—he was fifty, and sickness had made of him an emaciated old man, whose eyes alone burned passionately in a face as pale as wax—he spent nights and days in conferences with Father Joseph, preparing negotiations, dictating instructions for ambassadors, trying to join to his advantage the meshes of a net of alliances where the enemy were likely to become entangled. His emissaries travel throughout the whole of Europe. Armed with the full authority of their master, they dispute, they make promises, they finish by signing.

What did France need to begin with? A support in the extreme north, for an eventual expedition in the United Provinces, if the French intended to drive out the Spaniards. The supports were found: they were the Swedish allies. But still it was essential that they themselves should be free to act. Now the six years' truce that Char-nacé had concluded between them and the Poles was about to expire, and, one day or another, hostilities would be renewed. Claude de Mesmes, Comte d'Avaux, was charged with the task of re-establishing, at least provisionally, an agreement between them. He was able to persuade them, and concluded a fresh treaty, for twenty-six years this time. The Swedes, freed of all preoccupation in central Europe, were then able to co-operate with France.

And France required, elsewhere, an experienced general with a body of troops to occupy the centre of this vast front. The Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, after laborious deliberations, was willing to play for France the part that Gustavus Adolphus had held before him. Commander-in-chief of the confederate forces, he raised six thousand horse and twelve thousand foot, and was placed in charge

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

of the operations, all of which were always to be referred to the King of France. His pay was important: four million *livres* per annum (eighty million francs) for as long as the war lasted, then, when hostilities ceased, an annual income of 1,500,000 *livres* (thirty million francs) and the title of Landgrave of Alsace. This was dear, but this body of 18,000 soldiers might become a decisive factor in future operations.

It was equally necessary for the French to protect themselves in the south. True, they held the passages of the Grisons and Susa; but this was not sufficient in such an important war, if they could not count also on the Italian princes: France could not risk being taken on the flank. The negotiations were long and difficult, and Belière, Richelieu's plenipotentiary, had to employ all the resources of a persuasive talent: he had to bid against partners who knew how to deal. He eventually reached a satisfactory solution with them by dint of promises for the future; and thus was concluded at Rivoli, in July 1635, an offensive league against Spain: it comprised the Dukes of Savoy, Modena, Parma and Mantua. The veteran Rohan, who had little intelligence, but who knew how to handle troops by his courage and pertinacity, was sent to Valtellina with 12,000 men. Thus, the Spanish troops of the Duchy of Milan, all the passages being blocked, and finding themselves confronted by a menacing league, were henceforth rendered immobile, deprived of all connection with Austria and with their garrisons in the United Provinces as well.

A new agreement, between France and Holland, was established a little later. It constituted a defensive alliance, which had for its object the expulsion of the Spaniards from the Netherlands.

RICHELIEU

Thus, in so far as it was possible to create diversions, to stir up adversaries against the enemy and immobilise him and divide him, Richelieu's diplomacy had triumphed. But this was no longer a task for negotiators; it was now necessary to fight.

We do not intend to relate in detail the military operations, in which the Cardinal was not involved; only exceptional circumstances permitted him to appear with the armies, and silent, impenetrable, always affirming his faith in a successful issue, he waited, confident that the French army would be raised, organised, and in the end show its prowess, after the initial set-backs and delusions.

A rapid advance by French troops in Holland had been too soon regarded as a victory. They were soon driven out, and Condé, who meanwhile had invaded the Franche-Comté, was unable to take Dôle. The Emperor then declared war on France, and the governor of the Netherlands, Don Fernando, finding the ground free since French troops had been overthrown, came down from north to south, captured Corbie, and sent couriers as far as Pontoise.

In Paris there were days of horror and panic, but there was also an awakening of national sentiment, and a desire for resistance and revenge. How many times has the same phenomenon been reproduced in the course of French history! It is the time of danger, the moment of defeat when all seems lost, that shows up so strongly the qualities of the race, its energy, its unbelievable faculties of improvisation, the spirit which enables it to repair suddenly every mistake, to reach the extreme point of recoil, there to face the surprised enemy, and throw itself upon him with a fury that carries all before it. In the heat and terror at the beginning it was the Cardinal who was held to be

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

responsible; and that not only by the crowd: the most formidable opposition came from the nobles and the Parlement.

But Louis XIII, with the courage which makes him one of France's greatest kings, punished the rebels, and at the same time prescribed measures of defence which showed that he was anticipating a long war, but not a defeat: thus he authorised the construction of new grain mills on the banks of the Seine, to replace those which were lost by the invasion. For a moment Richelieu faltered; there was an outcry against him; the mob was massed at the gates of his palace, hostile and turbulent; it seemed to be surrounded by the furious populace; abusive proclamations, representing him as responsible for all the misfortunes, were posted up on the walls; and one may believe that, dejected by his physical sufferings, he had a moment of weakness and discouragement. But Father Joseph did not desert him; his voice, rough and blunt, galvanised this feeble body—for it was the body, not the spirit, that made the Cardinal flinch—and, soon master of himself, forcing himself to forget his sufferings, to appear calm and collected, to regard the crowds with indifference, Richelieu entered a coach and drove without an escort, he who never travelled without his company of guards, through the seething town. It was immediately pacified. The King hurried to place himself at the head of his troops, believing that his place was in the battle-line, and, on the steps of the Town Hall recruiting commenced: this was a national army that was being organised in order to drive out the invader. At this moment in her history, France, pressing on towards a new ideal by the will of Richelieu, ceased being simply a monarchy and became a fatherland: *la patrie* was born.

RICHELIEU

It took three years to change these heroic but inexperienced troops into an army: three years of marches and counter-marches, of exhausting manoeuvres and perilous warfare. Corbie, however, was no longer in the hands of the enemy: Louis XIII had marched against the town, and the Imperialists, who did not feel themselves to be strong enough, withdrew.

In Burgundy, the enemy had taken Dijon. He was driven out of it on the third of November 1636, and from this date there were no more invaders on French soil, except at St. Jean-de-Luz, which was of little consequence, and in the Lerin islands, which could become a more serious menace.

French soil was then free of invasion, but this was not yet victory. The army, enthusiastic but lacking instruction, was not a very powerful fighting-machine, and Bernard of Saxe-Weimar did not supply the support which it needed. Richelieu was oppressed by other anxieties: in spite of all his efforts, and the intense activity of his hidden diplomacy, the son of Ferdinand II was elected King of the Romans, and succeeded to the Empire; the House of Austria thus preserved its prestige and its supremacy. But, besides, the new Emperor—he ascended the throne in February, 1637—had none of his father's fighting spirit, and this dream of Europe made Catholic interested him but slightly. He had not, as his father had, a purpose guiding all his policy. The accession of this prince, then, was very fortunate for France, and compensated Richelieu a little for the loss of Valtellina, abandoned by Rohan, who had neither sufficient troops nor sufficient money to retain it.

Thus, all this period of war had produced no result: groping, exasperated, no superiority could be claimed by one side or the other. It was this that Richelieu had hoped

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

for. He knew well that he could not effect a victory all at once: in the first place, it was necessary to build up his army and to train it. But time was his ally. It was sufficient for him to be able to carry on whilst building up his strength, but the same could not be said of his adversaries. And that is why he welcomed the arrival of the year 1638 with greater confidence and renewed hope.

A supplementary army had been raised in France and, on his side, Bernard de Saxe-Weimar had recruited fresh troops, strong and well provisioned. At all points where action had taken place the conflict was redoubled. The energy which animated the French troops was not only a proof of their courage, their better training, an organisation of which they were proving the excellence; it was Richelieu's will, his energy of spirit which was prolonging life in an attenuated body, which radiated from him to the enthusiastic soldiers. And was it not said, in a low voice, lest one should be mistaken, that the Queen was pregnant, and that the King would perhaps have an heir at last . . . ? Fortune had turned. One felt that it was a blessing from above.

In a great and dashing offensive in which many towns were taken and many victories won, Bernard cleared the Rhine; he took Säckingen, Lanfenburg, Waldshut, and laid siege to Rheinfelden, the fourth bridge-head. The imperial army hurried towards him, tried to check him, and was defeated. Corbie was avenged! . . . The famous roving troop leader, Werth, who had caused terror in France, was captured by Bernard. Rheinfelden fell, and after this there was the siege of Brisach. Brisach was a stronghold of no importance in itself, but by its prominent position and the necessities of Spanish strategy, was of considerable value and could be considered as one of the

pivots of this European war. So long as Brisach remained standing, faithful to the Spanish coalition, commanding profitably the valley of the Rhine, communication could be made between the imperial troops of the south, increased by Spanish reinforcements, and the garrisons of the Netherlands. But if the French were to take Brisach, and if they could thus command the valley of the Rhine, the gate was shut and the bolt drawn: the hostile armies, shut up in their centre, would be unable to regain their communications, and Spain could not send reinforcements except by sea.

The siege lasted several months—several months during which Richelieu was not seriously preoccupied: the position of the war satisfied him—while close at hand was the hope that France would soon have an heir to the throne, after twenty-six years of waiting, and would be spared the anguish of a succession which would have given up the country to Gaston d'Orléans.

The Cardinal, worn out by work which would have sapped the strength of the strongest, racked unceasingly by his maladies, continued to spend nights without sleep and, exchanging daily messages with his generals and his negotiators, carried on unswervingly his work of reorganisation, administrative, military, judicial and religious: he was fashioning a new France. Beside him, always present, always deeply interested, clearing up questions, sounding public opinion, and interpolating the agency of God, if one may so express it, in all the problems that occupied Richelieu, Father Joseph, in spite of his robust appearance, suddenly collapsed. For him, more so perhaps than for Louis XIII or for Richelieu, the capture of Brisach was of vital importance, for while the policy of the King and his minister was altogether temporal, seeking only the hege-

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

mony of France over Austria as a nation, Father Joseph's ideal was higher: France must occupy the foremost place in Europe because he was concerned, and solely concerned, in bringing about the triumph of the Catholic cause. This role of the soldier of God he would never leave to Austria or to Spain; if they tried to arrogate it to themselves they must be beaten: *gesta Dei per Francos!* . . . Victory, and the fall of Brisach which would facilitate it, had, then, for the grey-haired cleric a symbolic value.

When he lay at the point of death, Brisach still held out. But from his couriers Richelieu knew that the town was at the end of its resources and could not hold out longer than a few days, perhaps a few hours. So he felt that he was entitled to tell a lie. He did not wish that one who had shared his thoughts, and had sustained him in all his perplexities, with such disinterestedness, such self-abnegation, should, whilst still possessed of all his faculties, draw his last breath without having known what was to him the consummation of his life. He was entitled to his reward: it was right that he should die happy. As if he had just received the news, Richelieu leaned over the iron bed where the capuchin lay dying, and cried to him in a faltering voice:

'Father Joseph! . . . Father Joseph! . . . Brisach is ours!'

This lie, which became a truth forty-eight hours later, was the most beautiful gift that friendship could give to the pillow of death. The face lighted up a little, and he passed away, as Richelieu had wished him to, calmly and peacefully, in the belief that his work was accomplished.

From then, success was assured; the enemy became gradually weaker. When Brisach fell, in December 1638, the Dauphin who was to become Louis XIV was already four months old, and the succession to the throne was

RICHELIEU

assured. A year later, the Spanish fleet, which was conveying an army to the Netherlands, all the overland routes being closed, was intercepted and destroyed by the Dutch Admiral, Tromp. Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, who had become a dangerous ally, intoxicated by his success, and disposed to make a cause for himself, rendered Richelieu a service by dying suddenly, in July, 1639. Everything favoured France! . . . Sweden resumed her alliance with France, and the allied armies advanced, with nothing to bar their way, into the heart of Germany. Brisach and Alsace were now held; the enemy, discouraged, in disorder, and not even knowing why it was fighting, had no morale left to continue the fight; victory could no longer elude France. England, in the midst of civil war, for the time being had no interest in a continental policy. In central Europe, the Swedish allies occupied Saxe: Germany, wavering and cut up, soon sued for peace. Savoy and Piedmont had tried to revolt: Richelieu sent Harcourt to besiege Turin, and the town remained occupied by a French garrison; while, thanks to the intervention of Mazarin (he entered the service of France and, since Father Joseph's death, had been Richelieu's agent for foreign affairs), Prince Thomas of Savoy submitted to France and agreed to fight against the Spaniards. In the north, the latter lost Arras, the boulevard of Flanders, which came into France's possession, on account of the revolt of Portugal and Catalonia requiring the last of the Spanish forces to return for service in the Peninsula. Richelieu, in a last burst of genius, and even when his physical strength could scarcely sustain him, seized this occasion to provide France with her natural boundaries in securing for her the line of the Pyrenees: in a powerful offensive he launched the French troops on the Roussillon, which, in spite of stubborn resistance, was

RICHELIEU AND EUROPE

conquered town by town. The Cardinal was at Lyons, worn out and ill, feeling the approach of death, when he heard that the capital of the province was at last taken. He then addressed to Louis XIII his last bulletin of victory:

‘Sire, your troops are in Perpignan, and your enemies have perished!’

The task was achieved; he had earned the right to enter into his rest.

CHAPTER XII

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

WHEN one follows in detail Richelieu's diplomatic activities, when one tries to imagine the extent of his preoccupation with foreign policy, and the anxieties, sometimes very grave, which the Spanish-Austrian war brought to him, it is clear that the simultaneous conduct of these two ministries, Foreign Affairs and War, was sufficient not only to occupy him to the full, but even to overwhelm him. But the very necessities of this war obliged him to construct his fighting-machine almost from day to day, and, foreseeing the future of the navy and its importance in the development of national prosperity, the Cardinal endeavoured to provide one for France, as he endeavoured to improve and to discipline her military establishments. This will for organisation he employed also upon all that concerned the civil life of the realm. This was not the most brilliant part of his task, but it was perhaps the most useful. To introduce order into chaos, discipline into anarchy, a hierarchy into the midst of dispersion, to bring into subjection the scattered and often antagonistic forces of which France was composed, at the impulse of a single idea: in short, to create a central government, and to set flowing from that government, that is from the King and himself, a vigorous influx that would permeate every limb and muscle of the kingdom—such was Richelieu's design.

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

He did not modify the conception of military service, such as had always existed, and which no one imagined should be a general obligation. France did not adhere entirely to the old feudal custom, by which the threatened suzerain collected all his vassals to support him, but had progressed little since the Middle Ages. The standing army of Henry iv, his peace-time army, never exceeded 10,000 men, and these were mercenaries. Richelieu's first move was for an effective force: in order to fight against the Huguenots, against the rebels, and especially against the House of Austria, he required numerous army corps, and he had to use these in several theatres simultaneously. Richelieu proceeded by stages: recruiting was difficult, the treasury was often in debt, clothing and armaments could not be improvised; he had then to temporise as well as he could. But, after his arrival at the ministry, he raised the army to 60,000 men: he had 150,000 from 1635 onwards. These were certainly not altogether homogeneous, but the majority of them were professional soldiers, many of them foreigners, who fought bravely, as men having no other interest or thought in life. Germans, Swiss, Italians, Scots, Irishmen, Belgians, Poles even, composed these mixed regiments, for whom war was a profession and peace a sort of demoralising unemployment.

As the war dragged on, the effective troops became thinned out, and Richelieu had to think of recruiting methods other than the hiring of mercenaries in France or from abroad. He contrived to make the whole country collaborate in providing human material, by imposing on the Elections and on the towns the obligation to furnish him with men. Thus, the provinces became partners in providing the fighting forces, offensive or defensive, of the kingdom, and, what was more, in maintaining them: for

they had to support and pay the soldiers which they sent to the army.

There was, then, in this new method of recruiting conceived by Richelieu, the first outline of an organisation in which military service imposed a patriotic duty on the whole country. But this obligation was not yet regarded as a personal and individual one: the province, or the city, had to provide such and such a number of men, but, as regards the men themselves, they had no power to coerce them; for the soldier, service remained voluntary, and whoever wished to do so could enlist. Nevertheless, in a case of serious necessity, there were ways and means of bringing about a response to the call. When, having taken Corbie, the Spaniards had advanced as far as Pontoise, the Cardinal issued an edict, signed by the King, which obliged all merchants or artisans to close their places of business and set free their apprentices. This meant, from day to day, throwing upon the street and reducing to want a considerable crowd of young men, which the recruiting sergeants had but to intoxicate, with wine and promises, in order to enlist them without much difficulty.

To Richelieu likewise can be traced the creation of a particular organism, as yet external to the army, but which became, as a result, incorporated closely with it, that of maintenance. In the old monarchic organisation the commanders of companies and regiments were themselves responsible for clothing, arming and equipping the recruits. But the considerable duration of campaigns, the distance between fields of action, and remote expeditions, made clear the inadequacy, the dangers and also the practical impossibilities of such a system. The same man could not, at the same time, lead his troops, direct

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

military operations, and occupy himself with the thousand matters of victualling and transport. There was need for specialists, for technicians, and these Richelieu created by attaching to the army councillors of state or masters of requests, who were skilled in the practical side of business, who understood administration, and whose integrity was beyond reproach. Commissioned and placed in a responsible position by the direction of the minister, whose representatives they were, they had to supervise and control all the services, all the contracts, all the distribution. The paymasters' accounts were under their control, they had to keep an account of the strength. Nor did their duties cease here: introduced into the councils of war, they were still in charge of the regulations concerning the disabled. They had also the right, in any case of malpractice observed by them, to arrest immediately the officer whom they considered culpable, without referring the matter to a central authority. Thanks to the creation of these commissaries, the administration of the armies was much superior to their command. Good captains, tried under fire, are developed slowly, and during the Spanish-Austrian war the best generals were foreigners: Wallenstein, Gustavus Adolphus, Bernard of Saxe-Weimar. France had only Rohan and Guébriant amongst a large crowd of decorative incompetents.

'Strength of arms,' said Richelieu, 'demands not only that the King be strong on land, but also that he be powerful at sea.'

When he assumed power, the French navy was found to be in a condition worse even than that of the army; or, to speak more exactly, the country had no navy, and, if it had had one, this navy would have had no chief. There was, in fact, a post of Admiral of France, which belonged

RICHELIEU

to the Duc de Montmorency; but the governor of Brittany was admiral of his own province, the governor of Provence of his, while the governor of Guyenne had control from the Loire to Bidassoa. The effective command of the Admiral of France was confined to the coasts of the Channel and the North Sea. We have seen how easily the English were able to bring a fleet into French waters; France had no means of obstructing them, nor any means of impressing Spain, or of hindering her from going to 'the Indies' in search of the treasures on which she subsisted.

One of the first great conceptions of Richelieu was that France, who had no fleet, should aim at becoming an important maritime power, and that the paths of her development and prosperity should be found on the sea even more than on land.

Before constructing, before even tracing the first lines of foundation, he wished to take stock of the situation and, so to speak, to measure the void. He assumed the new office of Grand Master of Navigation and Commerce, with authority over all the coasts of France. In possession of full sovereignty, he sent in 1629 his commissioner-general, Louis le Roux d'Infreville, to inspect the ocean ports, to register the names of all commanding officers and to verify their titles, to make lists of vessels and small craft of every description, to make returns of all the local ships and crews that were unattached, and to classify their particular line of business. Infreville worked for two years, and submitted to the minister a comprehensive survey, effectively documented.

Disorder was rife. It seemed, to judge from what went on there, that the coasts of France did not belong to the crown. The seaside municipalities, or the great lords, or

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

the rectors, or the religious communities, levied the dues on anchorage, on fishing, on the arrival and departure of vessels. In exchange for their privileges, these bodies, municipal and ecclesiastical, these holders of prebends, should at least have attended to the upkeep of the quays, ports and estuaries. They bothered little about them, everywhere there was dilapidation, forts in ruins, light-houses crumbling, channels choked with mud. Everything was to be done. It was first of all necessary, by a stroke of the pen, to place the coasts of France again under the sovereignty of the King, clearing them of all parasites; after this was done, it was possible to consider reconstruction. But at first, whilst the ports were being handed back to the State, it was necessary to push on with shipbuilding. Richelieu gave his orders and passed on his commands: from Dieppe to Bordeaux, every maritime town received authority to place several ships on the stocks; meanwhile, in case of necessity, a certain number of good merchant ships were armed with cannon. The ordnance came from abroad: the Dutch were the best furnishers, and vast magazines, destined to supply the navy, were raised at Brouage, and at La Rochelle, loyal once more.

A similar work of inspection was carried out on the Mediterranean coasts by Henri de Séguiran, assisted by the geometer, Jacques de Marez. France had there a few mediocre naval units, and some forts in a pitiable condition, whose armaments were a laughing-stock. The incurable and joyous abandon of the Midi was added to the general disorder: the governor of one of the forts at Toulon had no garrison but his wife and servant, with four cannons, three of which were out of order. There was no lack of seamen: seven thousand were registered. But they had neither commanders nor ships. Meanwhile

RICHELIEU

the fierce pirates who infested the Mediterranean pillaged the French coasts with an impudence and a regularity that showed how much they knew about the French navy. The Salins of Hyères saw them arrive periodically; they had captured all the ships at Antibes, and had carried off eighty prisoners at Martigues. As he had done for the fleet of the Ponant (Ocean, Channel, North Sea), Richelieu gave his orders for the fleet of the Levant. But, conforming to the custom of southern navigation, he there replaced sailing ships by galleys. From 1636, the fleet of the Ponant comprised thirty-nine vessels, and that of the Levant twenty-two galleys. It took Richelieu only a few years of hard work to provide France with a navy. At the beginning of 1642, mustering in the Mediterranean, in Toulon roads, all the forces at his disposal, there was to be seen, afloat and glittering beneath the Provençal sun, the multi-coloured shields of a magnificent squadron—his personal work—of twenty-two galleys and sixty-five ships. The work of reorganising and repairing the ports he carried out with a similar activity. To rule this vast organisation, Richelieu created the Naval Council, which assisted him in all his labours, and he appointed a secretary-general for the navy, who had charge of all the correspondence. A stable hierarchy, with few gradations, allowed him to entrust the execution of his orders to thirty-eight ordinary commissaries, who were directed by three general commissaries, themselves controlled by a general superintendent. It should be mentioned here that, in recruiting sailors, even if all the able seamen on the register had been needed, these would not have been compelled to serve. In the navy, as in the army, the system was a voluntary one: the galley-slaves alone were subjected to compulsory service. We may point out also that the

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

government directed the courts of justice to condemn men to forced labour rather than to prison or death.

Until the end of his life Richelieu maintained a lively interest in maritime affairs. In 1642, the Naval Council examined a project, drawn up by an excellent officer, Manty, for regulating the entire French navy. The Cardinal would not consider it. It was later brought into practice by Colbert. But what seems to us to be particularly worthy of notice in all these creations of Richelieu is that, conceived in a design for defence or protection, they never seemed to veer towards conquest: there was no imperialism in this dictatorship. The Cardinal desired a navy so that France should not be at the mercy of her neighbours, and above all he desired the immunity of the merchant fleet on the high seas, to enable it to trade freely. What he had in mind was to bring about the maximum of exports and the minimum of imports, to export all French products, to allow nothing to be brought in except such things as were urgently needed, and thus to swell the treasury. This protectionism brought about the promulgation of a monopoly in favour of French vessels; these alone had the right to carry from the kingdom the products of national industry. But this economic protectionism would have been ineffectual if the seas had not been under the surveillance of an armed fleet: shipping, especially in the Mediterranean, was constantly exposed to attack by pirates. It was impossible to be entirely protected from them; the best way to keep out of their clutches was to charter merchant ships powerful enough to intimidate them or swift enough to escape them, and to substitute collective expeditions for individual voyages.

The formation of the great trading companies resulted, and this was one of the essential articles of the maritime

programme which, during the whole of his ministry, Richelieu studied and brought to perfection. The Morbihan Company, the Nacelle de Saint-Pierre Fleurdelysée, the Cent Associés, the Iles d'Amérique, the companies of Africa and the Indies, supported in their local task by great numbers of missionaries, were not only commercial organisations but vast colonial enterprises bringing their efforts to bear upon every country in the world. There also we must note the peaceful and civilising character of all these institutions over which Richelieu presided. He had conceived the plan of an immense colonial domain, and as a result the French flag flew in Canada, in the Antilles, in Senegal, in Madagascar. But nowhere was its success due to brutality, tyranny, exaction or persecution; harmony, humanity, sincerity of religious thought, confidence inspired in the natives by the loyalty of the colonisers, were the principles that Richelieu strove to apply.

Minister for the Colonies and for Foreign Trade, the Cardinal, in opening up new sources of wealth for France, certainly did not forget, for he was also Minister of Finance, that the public treasury was in perpetual difficulty, that poverty was rampant amongst the humble people in town and in country. When he assumed power, he found little money in the coffers. Marie de Medici, by her wasteful extravagance, the expedition of Valtellina, and the struggle against the Huguenots, the levying of men, the provision of equipment, and the excessive cost of the siege, had succeeded in exhausting reserves which already were very scanty. The deficit was considerable, and continually increasing. He could not rely upon taxes to make it good, seeing that, owing to the system of contracts, the State received only about a third or a fourth of these. Throughout his life Richelieu dreamed of a reformed fiscal policy,

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

and sought for ways and means to establish the public finances firmly. Certainly, he never discovered them; sound finance rests above all on the industry of the nation, and on an exact balance between production and consumption. It is not to his discredit that he did not succeed, for this is a task that cannot be compassed in the life of any one man. This financial purification, which he had always in mind, Richelieu, in spite of his genius, was never in a position to realise; and like other ministers who succeeded him or who succeeded to the management of public funds, he was obliged to have recourse to the usual expedients, momentary and ruinous remedies, which appear to relieve the evil but in fact aggravate it: loans to pay off other loans; fresh arrangements for taxation, that is to say, its augmentation and the reduction of incomes, which together lead to partial bankruptcy; the sale of offices; debasement of the currency; desperate measures to which governments in extremity have always to return, in order to save themselves and leave to others the task of liquidation.

All these measures, it is true, were not passed without protests being raised: distress caused frequent disturbances, and the Parlements bestirred themselves, using their right to remonstrate. Richelieu's absolutism tolerated no opposition. Never was a man more profoundly convinced that assemblies, even the most serious and most desirous of accomplishing effective work, could never, by their very constitution, which engenders confusion, operate without causing delays and without attenuating or disarming the executive power. His whole ministry testifies to this ever latent opposition, coming to the surface at every crisis. The Parlement clung desperately to its privileges: the minister arrogated them to himself little by little. He deprived it of certain jurisdictions in order to commit them

RICHELIEU

to special tribunals, or, more explicitly, he surrendered accused persons, deprived of the customary guarantees, to commissions set up with the sole object of judging them; exceptional proceedings, which might seem revolting, but which were necessary to the Crown: for if these magistrates should ever have had occasion to render justice for it, the Parlement on principle might have overruled their verdict. Louis XIII supported Richelieu with his customary resolution, and his peremptory haughtiness, which derived not from his diffident character but from his conception of royal dignity. He spoke to councillors or ministers as if they were rebellious domestics, and banished them without regard for their age or rank. Finally, by an edict promulgated in 1641, the Parlement was prohibited from interfering in affairs of State. Richelieu's idea is abundantly clear: he wished to centralise authority and to place it under the sole guardianship of the King, and he sought to attain this end, not only by reducing the Parlement of Paris, but by exercising an analogous action through all the provinces of France.

There was, in fact, perpetual conflict between the provincial Parlements and those functionaries sent to them as inspectors by the Crown, who represented, though with scant power and in very precarious fashion, the intervention of central authority in the scattered parts of the kingdom. Richelieu, to increase national cohesion, and to bind more closely all the component parts to a governmental motive-power, replaced these *maîtres de requêtes* by commissioners.

The difference was most considerable: the first possessed only the right of inspection and investigation, the second had full authority to decide issues. They were, in other words, the direct emanation of the executive, acting

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

in his name, and acknowledged by him. The new powers accorded by Richelieu to these royal functionaries, which he had not created, but whose role he had transformed, made some of them his confidential agents, his personal emissaries, the enthusiastic tools of his direct action. They were hated because, expressing the will of a minister all powerful, they tended to become proud, insolent, self-important. Some of them, Machault with his gallows, Laffemas with his hypocrisy, Laubardemont with his duplicity and cruelty in the trial of Urbain Grandier, vicar of Loudun, accused of sorcery and burnt alive, remain notorious. As always happens, regrettable but inevitable exceptions under any regime live on in the popular memory, which takes account neither of determining factors nor of generous benefits. We can comprehend exactly the trend and the usefulness of the role devolved by Richelieu to his commissioners, if we recall the lines devoted to them in his *Political Testament*:

‘I believe that it will be beneficial to send well-chosen councillors of State or *maîtres de requêtes* frequently to the provinces, not only to act as commissioners of justice in the capital towns, which conduces to their pride rather than to the public welfare, but, in every provincial capital, to investigate the ways of officers of justice and their finances, to see if taxes are gathered according to law, if the collectors cause any injustice by vexing the people; to discover how the nobility directs its affairs, and to stop all kinds of disorder, especially the unjust actions of the powerful and rich who oppress the weak and humble subjects of the King.’

Constantly we find in Richelieu’s writings this solicitude which we might call democratic, if, at this epoch, the term did not seem paradoxical and even ludicrous. We may

RICHELIEU

say, at least, that he regarded the people with a sentiment strange to the country at large and to the national temper, and that those whom he attacked without rest and without mercy, the nobles and the parliamentarians, were in reality defenders of their class privileges, but not defenders of the people, who were allied naturally to the Crown.

This spirit of authority and centralisation is also to be found in Richelieu's attitude towards the Church. A good Catholic, devout without being narrow, he always regarded the Church from the standpoint of a politician rather than a theologian, in its connection with the State rather than with God. Nevertheless, he endeavoured to reform certain abuses and to eliminate from the high clergy that worldliness which horrified the Reformers: 'It is above all necessary,' he wrote, 'that a bishop should be humble and charitable, that he should have knowledge and piety, steadfast courage and ardent zeal for the salvation of souls.'

Similarly, he reformed certain religious orders which had come to disregard completely the prescriptions of their rule, and he endeavoured to reduce the number of monasteries. Being a man of action, he was little interested in the contemplative orders. Those who obtained his sympathy were the learned orders, who were able to contribute to the glory of his ministry and to work with him towards the improvement of the mind as well as of the soul. Appointed principal of the Sorbonne from 1622, he restored and enlarged the buildings, a number of privileges having been granted to him, and he built, from 1635 to 1642, the church which still stands, and where his tomb may be found. Throughout his ministry he had to interfere in these deep and delicate questions which excite the Church, wherein spiritual and temporal interests are inextricably mingled, the pretensions of the Papacy and those of

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

Gallicanism, problems of doctrine and questions of finance. On this perpetually slippery terrain, Richelieu showed marvellous opportunism, avoiding any pronouncement on principles, seeking only particular solutions. His ideal was to maintain a just middle course, and in 1641 he drew up, with Pierre de Marca, a work entitled *De Concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii*, designed to prove that Gallican immunity did not impair the imprescriptible rights of the Papacy. But although he thus asserted the rights of Gallicanism with regard to the Holy See, he did not recognise any privileges for it so far as public finances were concerned. On this point the Cardinal's authority was felt to be oppressive by the clergy, who, with helpless amazement and indignation, saw themselves being deprived of long-standing immunities. Practically, the clergy were exempt from taxes, and confined themselves, when necessary, to voluntary contributions; they haggled over them peevishly, and reduced them to a minimum. Richelieu made up his mind, and in 1639 announced his decision to make the clergy contribute thereafter without consulting them. By royal proclamation, he enacted that ecclesiastical property was of precarious tenure, that the possession of the benefits of *mortmain* was a concession from the King, and that, in every way, he should be compensated in exchange for the benefits which he thus conferred, proportionately to their value.

There followed a series of clerical laws which to-day we should call a fiscal inquisition: declaration and control of revenues, with inventories of property. As may easily be imagined, a storm burst forth in every diocese of France. Despite the opposition of the Government, the clergy met in a general assembly; orators thundered, protested, wailed, passed resolutions, and finally the King

RICHELIEU

had to expel and send back to their dioceses a number of prelates who became over-excited. The Pope anathematised those who dared to make an attempt on property of the Church; but the courts prevented the publishing of this Papal Bull in France. The authority of the Cardinal-Minister could not allow that of the supreme Pontiff to cross the French frontier, and the clergy had to submit to the law thenceforth imposed upon them. Some historians express astonishment at what they call a contradiction, by recalling that in 1615, speaking for the clergy, Richelieu forcibly declared himself to be in favour of clerical immunity. But in fact, he was then only the spokesman of his order, defending the cause of which he had charge. On the day when he became spokesman for France, he regarded himself as trustee for a higher cause, and, from the pinnacle where he sat, all private interests were equal before him. Here was no contradiction, simply a scrupulous devotion to the duties which a dictatorship imposes on the man who holds it.

One characteristic of the dictatorial mind is to bring under State jurisdiction every single form of activity, whatever its nature. It cannot be claimed, however, that Richelieu ever tyrannised ideas or restrained their expression. For twelve years, Mathieu de Morgues, who, until 1630, had been one of his intimate friends and protégés, had pursued him with a tenacious, subtle, ingenious hatred, which not even the Cardinal's death could mitigate. Richelieu replied to the lampoons that attacked him, and doubtless was annoyed by this abusive persecution; but never did he try to stifle the pamphleteer's voice, and when the charge was altogether personal, and so gratuitous that he could treat it with contempt, the Cardinal enjoined

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

silence on his usual mouthpieces—Hay du Châtelet, Jean Sirmond, Du Ferrier, De Sancy, Scipion Dupleix—and let the insult lie where it fell. Such was his treatment of that spiteful outburst in which Mathieu de Morgues insinuated, in veiled terms, that his animosity against the English was due to jealousy inspired by the sentiments of Buckingham and Anne of Austria. The matter was never taken up. This was not the attitude of a man seeking to forbid the free expression of individual opinions. But if he tolerated liberty, he was still consistent enough to all his political and national ideals to imagine, in the world of literature, an organisation, a centralisation, a juridical authority, analogous to those councils which he had created in other spheres, such as the navy, for example. Like all men of constructive and co-ordinative mind, he believed in the efficacy of regulated principles in order to ensure discipline, for he was of the opinion that there could be no solidarity, nor any permanence, in dispersion, caprice or anarchy. Nevertheless, however much he may have loved poetry, and prided himself on being a skilled judge, he might never have thought of setting up this supreme tribunal if he had not found the first outline already sketched.

Here, as in many other institutions, we see him adapting something that already exists, but modifying it, and adjusting it to a new idea. The assemblage of men of letters which was the nucleus of the Academy did not owe its existence to him. There were a number of middle-class citizens, intelligent and cultivated men, who, desirous of exchanging ideas on questions of the hour, met weekly at the house of one amongst them, Valentin Conrart, in order to converse in friendly fashion. Boisrobert, a member of this circle and one of Richelieu's intimates—almost his licensed jester—had occasion to inform him

of its existence. In that moment the Academy was created. Richelieu saw immediately—but perhaps he was mistaken—the advantage that literature would derive from the constitution of a tribunal which should judge beauty by balance, rule and compass. On February 10, 1635, by letters patent signed by the King, the French Academy received its official name and its constitution. Forty participants, freed of ‘watch and ward,’ were its first members, and Richelieu, ‘principal and protector’ of this new body, became its president and inspirer, positions which he already occupied in all the other councils charged with assisting him in the government of the kingdom. That the Academy was, in his mind, an organ of jurisdiction, control and regulation, the choice of the first Academicians abundantly proves: critics, men of the world and grammarians, chosen for their theoretic knowledge and refined taste, rather than for their personal worth or the originality of their works; and the statutes declared that the Academy should fix the rules of the language, refine it, define its terms, and at the same time establish a dictionary, a grammar, and rules of poetics and rhetoric. It had not been long founded, when Richelieu caused it to assume the exact function which he had attributed to it, by charging it to deliver his decision in the affair of *Le Cid*.

This is one of the episodes in the Cardinal’s life where tradition attempts to traduce him, and to attribute to him shameful, improbable and ludicrous grievances. No government, in the prevailing circumstances, would have tolerated the performance of *Le Cid*. The war between France and Spain had reached its climax; the northern provinces of France were painfully recovering their breath after the invasion which had overthrown them; Corbie had been taken; the enemy’s scouts had advanced almost

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

to the gates of the capital; troops had to be recruited in great haste; strong measures of public safety had to be resorted to; and here was a young poet who, by exalting Spanish heroism in his verses, was showing the same haste as Chimène when she married her father's murderer! . . . The artistic merit of a work counts for little when it contains elements of topicality or scandal: it is these which then stand out.

To applaud *Le Cid* with enthusiasm was an indirect way of condemning the Cardinal's policy, and of showing him, without risk, a vigorous and unmistakable antipathy. By not opposing, for political reasons, the performances of *Le Cid*, Richelieu showed how far his liberalism went; that he had wished to 'return the compliment,' and had proclaimed publicly that this piece, so frantically applauded, had more defects than these plaudits had extra-literary significance, we agree to be fair play. We should grant also that this task was not calculated to please the Academicians, and that the first cause considered by this tribunal demonstrated its impotence in matters of æsthetic jurisprudence.

Thus, in every domain where social activity is exercised, we see Richelieu showing the same will for organisation, centralisation and nationalisation, and providing a chaotic State with a coherent constitution without profound upheavals, but rather by a recasting and an easy readjustment of all the machinery. To him was due the resplendent glory of the French monarchy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. We cannot discover in past history another example of national recovery so swift and magnificent. Fascism alone, at the present day, can present us with a similar achievement. Even the institution of the

RICHELIEU

Grand Fascist Council is prefigured in the great Royal Council; but this was not primarily a creation, but rather a work of reforming an existing institution. In January, 1630, the decree of reorganisation was promulgated. The Council was divided into four sections: the privy council, the council of affairs and despatches, the council of state and finances, and the council of finance. But there was also set up a special council, the strictly limited secret council, which met in the King's chamber, and to which only the principal ministers of State were admitted. In this body questions of peace and war were discussed and, in general, all the essentials of internal and external policy. The head of this council, or its president, was called 'the principal minister of State.' When he possessed the prestige and authority of Richelieu, those who surrounded him were confined to the study of questions submitted to them, and adduced their conclusions; but the chief minister possessed, in fact if not as a right, all the powers of a dictator.

'Nothing is more dangerous in a State,' wrote the Cardinal, 'than diverse authorities on equal terms in the administration of affairs. . . . If it be true that monarchical government resembles that of God more than any other, it may boldly be said that, if the sovereign be unable or unwilling to keep his own eye continually on chart and compass, reason insists that he should hand over the charge to someone above all the others.'

We have here the very definition of dictatorship. Also, to these secretaryships of State, however exalted or subordinate, Richelieu would admit only tools and kinsmen of his own, men on whose submissiveness he could thoroughly depend. The only person in whom he had complete confidence was Father Joseph, who, strictly

RICHELIEU THE ORGANISER

speaking, did not possess the title of secretary, but that of minister of State, and who directed, at the Cardinal's side, external affairs. It was into these Royal Councils that Richelieu introduced Giulio Mazarini, who, having gauged his own talents and their potentialities, decided to abandon the service of the Pope to enter that of France. This was an event of supreme importance for the future, and one which also shows the kind of principles whereby Richelieu governed. Considerations of State alone decided him. Neither a long pedigree, nor the worldly pomp of a courtier, constituted in his eyes a title to official employment or responsible posts. Usefulness and ability to serve were the permanent considerations. An adventurer of genius, to whom he could offer success in exchange for devotion, was of more worth to him than an incompetent nobleman, however honourable.

'The public weal,' wrote the Cardinal, 'must be the sole object of the prince and his councillors, or at least they must esteem it so highly that they prefer it to the welfare of the individual.'

It may be said that all the reorganisation of the kingdom, as we have described it in outline, springs logically from this guiding principle.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAST ASSAULT

POSTERITY has seldom been just to Richelieu: his relentless will, his austerity, his espionage, the ruthless determination with which, by exceptional jurisdiction, he overcame his opponents, have in the long run transformed him, with the complicity of the Romantics, into a legendary figure, demonic and repellent—the only one which most of us know. These melodramatic conceptions are as false as they are puerile. Richelieu was neither god nor demon: simply a man and, without a doubt, in the domain of politics, one of the greatest that Western civilisation has produced. He measured exactly the immensity and the difficulties of the work he wished to accomplish; he considered it necessary, possessed as he was with the belief that it would enhance the greatness of France and the splendour of royalty; his success was assured, as he was gifted with the intelligence for defining problems and the imagination for resolving them. His route thus traced, his destination settled, every obstacle must be overcome, whatever it might be. There was no admission of cruelty or tyranny; however considerable or eminent his opponents, neither their distinctive characters, nor their ancestors, nor their services, were comparable to the importance of the task that he had assumed. Inexorable he was, because all his undertakings compelled him to be so; the slightest sign of weakness, any lassitude, any indulgence, any

THE LAST ASSAULT

pardon, would have increased the audacity of the opposition, which was drawn up against him until his death, and never disarmed. On the contrary, from one period to another, because the policy of the minister triumphed, because his will dominated even that of the King, because his fortune likewise permitted him to parade an unparalleled magnificence, the rancour, the envy, the hate, became darker and more underhand. Many of these plotters who, at the outset, had wished to remove him from power for doctrinal reasons, dreamed, with simmering passion, of the day when they might at length assassinate him: and it was not so much the minister that they wished to put to death in order to free themselves from his policy, it was the man, the red man, as some called him, that they wished to kill, in order to avenge themselves. Whenever it happened that some serious trouble convulsed the country and caused disorder, the endless conspiring of the nobility, of Gaston d'Orléans, of the Queen-Mother, hastened them on to some new adventure. Contemporaries laughed at the escort of guards that surrounded Richelieu, and at the network of arms that had to be penetrated before he could be reached: he would not have lived very long if he had been more accessible!

In 1636, at the time of the siege of Corbie, while Paris was writhing with the anguish of invasion, Gaston d'Orléans, the Comte de Soissons, and certain other great lords deemed the moment favourable for ridding themselves of the Cardinal. The assassination was fixed to take place at Amiens, on a signal given by Monsieur. But Monsieur, as faint-hearted in action as he was bold in devising conspiracies, faltered at the decisive moment. The affair was abandoned, but it had caused a certain amount of

noise. The Comte de Soissons escaped to Sedan, a principality of the Duc de Bouillon, and Gaston d'Orléans, whose birth placed him above repression, lay low, waiting for some fresh occasion when he could risk, without danger to himself, the life or liberty of his adherents.

In 1641, the hour seemed propitious. The imposition of fresh taxation had stirred up a general turmoil, the Cardinal was unpopular, the chance must be taken. The Comte de Soissons came to an understanding with the Spaniards, and this was, as it were, the first trace of the convention which, some months later, terminated the career of Cinq-Mars. He received some thousands of men from them, and marched against the royal troops. Fate was against him. He was defeated and slain at La Marfée, on July 6, 1641, and his death, which deprived them of a good general, was a sore blow to the conspirators.

They did not wait long, however, before renewing their attempt; in fact, it was necessary for them to hurry if they themselves wished to have the satisfaction of murdering the Cardinal, whose intelligence and will retained all their powers, but whose aspect from this time was that of a dying man, wasted by fever, exhausted by abscesses and by moments of semi-paralysis, and always tormented by rheumatism. But he never rested: so long as he had breath in his body, so long as his heart would beat, he must and would continue his work. He never recoiled from journeys which, even in our day, would fatigue a normal man; he travelled in a litter, crossing France whenever it seemed necessary, always tortured, inert, but vigilant and unflagging. By 1642, military operations were being directed in Roussillon. Several forts there belonged to Spain; French troops had taken Collioures in April, and were now besieging Perpignan. It was an important

THE LAST ASSAULT

action. Perpignan was the capital of the province, and its capture would have meant the expulsion of the Spaniards from Roussillon. Richelieu decided to go to the spot, and persuaded Louis XIII to go also. He did not care to leave him behind, for he feared the influence of Cinq-Mars, whom he had the soundest of reasons for distrusting.

Cinq-Mars and de Thou. . . . What tears has Vigny's novel been responsible for, a romance that no one would dare truthfully to call historical! . . . The two conspirators appear therein as heroes; in its pages they symbolise loyalty, nobility of soul, all that is most splendid; their friendship is one of those profound sentiments, mightier and more faithful than love, examples of which have been handed down to us by antiquity—Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias, Harmodius and Aristogeiton. And, above all these moral excellencies, they possessed that perfect elegance which, for sensitive spirits, is the most effectual of the virtues. As a matter of fact, and to judge impartially, it must be said that Cinq-Mars was a magnificent cavalier, for whose favours the ladies contended, in spite of his Auvergne accent. Otherwise, he was vain-glorious, a bully, with the ostentation of a parvenu; and so infatuated with himself, so intoxicated with the royal favour, was this aristocratic stripling, that he would have thought it perfectly natural to be offered the Regency.

As for de Thou, a small, ruddy, unpleasant man, the precise jurist type which ignores realities and firmly believes in the value of formulas, a capricious, ill-natured, sententious fellow, who began by holding aloof from the world with an affectation of stoical dignity, then plunged into it in order to form useful connections, and finally, not knowing very well where to cast his hook, attached himself desperately to the hare-brained Cinq-Mars—he is fundamentally,

RICHELIEU

by his affectations and his perpetual moralising, a character far more antipathetic than his brilliant accomplice. The latter, at least, played unaffectedly his role of the graceful youth unduly exalted by unexpected favour and, though ready for any folly, even treachery, could be excused, for on the whole he was but a lad incapable of understanding what he was doing.

On March 27, 1638—he was not yet eighteen—Henri d'Effiat, Marquis de Cinq-Mars, had been appointed grand master of the royal wardrobe. This was not his first appearance at Court. In consideration of the services rendered by his father, Antoine d'Effiat, comptroller of the treasury, Richelieu, two years previously, had given to the son, a lad of sixteen, the command of a company of guards. When he had been placed near to the King, as grand master of his wardrobe, we may conclude that the reign of a new favourite had begun. In fact, some months later, the youth was promoted to being grand equerry of France, and received from Louis XIII the county of Dam-martin: we may say, without any play on words, that this made him lose his head. . . .

We may be sure that Richelieu had acted on no thoughtless impulse when he offered this playboy to Louis XIII; he never acted without reasons, and in this case they were most important ones.

At the age of thirty-seven, that is to say at the age when a man is at the height of his vigour and vitality, Louis XIII, already grown old, often sad and restless, gave an impression of overwhelming listlessness and consuming melancholy. All his life he eschewed pleasure; if he amused himself by hunting or by attending to his garden, he did so in order to escape from himself; music, his only passion, was also a mode of escape. War alone could stay this

THE LAST ASSAULT

langour of spirit, but this was not a current remedy. In other respects, very easily influenced, as those of not altogether normal sensibility nearly always are, with harsh displays of temper, constant in his major designs but variable in his daily conduct, he allowed himself, through idleness or exasperation with life, to yield to various influences, especially those exercised by his favourites, male and female.

Louis XIII was not insensible to feminine charm, but an incurable timidity, associated with a strange coldness of temperament, had always turned him aside from women. Yet he was capable of love; in fact, he did love Mlle. de la Fayette and more especially Mlle. de Hautefort. But what a singular attachment! . . . These ladies were not mistresses. He did not desire physical contact; on the contrary, it was so repugnant to him that, until his *rapprochement* with Anne of Austria, there were long years when he had not used his conjugal rights, and the birth of the Dauphin, on September 5, 1638, stupefied the entire Court. What he sought from a woman was, above all, a trustful tenderness. When he was sorrowful, one had to be sorrowful too, and had to make him feel that he could speak freely without his confidence being betrayed. He was happy then, and had no wish for a more ardent happiness.

But Richelieu dreaded feminine intrigues. He always felt a certain distrust of women; he feared above all that one of them would some day reveal to Louis XIII the sensuous joys of which he was ignorant: the King would then become her slave. The Cardinal thought it preferable that he should devote himself to a masculine friendship rather than to an excessive fondness for a woman. The danger here was slight, for the suspicions which have been thrown on the morals of Louis XIII rest on no evidence and seem

improbable: his chastity was real, organic and consistent. There was then a real advantage—and no privation for him, since the physical question did not arise—in replacing a female favourite by a male one. In certain respects the choice of Cinq-Mars was an excellent one. Much younger than the King, who, strictly speaking, could have been his father, or at any rate his elder brother, Henri d'Effiat, emerging from adolescence, had brilliance, charm and the freshness of youth. Beside him, Louis XIII was able to feel more vigorous, to feel at least an illusive superiority. He did not experience, before this pleasing youth, so gay and flattering, so lively in conversation, the shyness which paralysed him before a young woman of the same age; but although there was no trace of viciousness in him, what attracted him to Cinq-Mars was his physical aspect, which had a decidedly feminine grace.

This was a spontaneous, impetuous affection, rather pitiful and touching and, it must be said, slightly ridiculous. Henri d'Effiat soon began to behave like a spoilt child, sure of his own power, vaunting his sense of security by his exactions and his insolences. Very often, Richelieu had to intervene in order to reconcile the sovereign and the favourite who, as a pledge of their appeasement, then crossed themselves with reciprocal promises of indulgence and good conduct. In other respects, Cinq-Mars, who owed all this extravagant favour to Richelieu, had not wit enough to understand what should be given in return. If he could not understand this, how could it be explained to him? . . . His function was really to bring a tender solicitude and friendliness into the emotional solitude of Louis XIII; but he was never expected to meddle with policy, or intrigues, or questions of government; and he should have endeavoured in every way to prove himself the devoted

THE LAST ASSAULT

servant of the Cardinal. Dazzled by his marvellous adventure, the rash youth longed to exalt himself still more; every day he demanded some privilege or some new title; Richelieu, who had summed him up, met his requests by systematic refusals. Cinq-Mars, then, imagined that everything was possible to him and that, because of his friendship with the King, he would be able to overthrow the minister and occupy his position. Such was the beginning of the celebrated conspiracy.

Its members were the same as ever: we find them again, animated by the same hates, moved by the same passions, as on the Day of Dupes. There was the opposition party, faithful to the old policy of the Queen-Mother, and hostile to the Protestant alliances; there were all the malcontents, all those who considered themselves injured through the loss of private or public titles; there was the nobility, which could never pardon the Cardinal for having crushed it and for having dealt so severely with some of its most brilliant representatives; finally, there was Gaston d'Orléans, who had no further hope of ascending the throne now that Louis XIII had an heir, but to whom the fact of war gave an opportunity of seizing it. The occasion seemed opportune. France was strenuously engaged against the Spaniards in the south-west provinces, and this was the moment to strike the Cardinal from the rear. The plan of the conspiracy was promptly drawn up, thanks to de Thou, who served as negotiator between Cinq-Mars, Gaston d'Orléans, and the Duc de Bouillon, but to whom, prudently, everything had not been revealed. Monsieur was to shut himself up in Sedan with his troops; the Duc de Bouillon would place the Italian army at the disposal of the movement; the Protestants of the Cévennes would rise in a body; and Spain, by a secret treaty signed by

RICHELIEU

Cinq-Mars's negotiator, Fontrailles, would furnish the rebels with 12,000 foot, 5,000 horse, munitions and the necessary money, in exchange for Sedan, which would be handed over to her. As for Richelieu, an opportunity to assassinate him would be found during his long journey in the retinue of the King to the scene of the siege of Perpignan. Collioures had been taken in April; the capital of the province was now being besieged; the arrival of the King and his minister showed how important to France was the success of this operation.

By road and canal, at a less rapid pace than Louis XIII, who went on in front escorted by Cinq-Mars, Richelieu travelled across France in his litter. He was a dying man, but he was sustained by an energy that seemed almost superhuman. His emaciated body was covered with suppurating sores. An ulcer was wearing away and paralysing his right arm. For relief he was being constantly bled, and this seriously aggravated his condition. This was the corpse that they wished to strike down: so long as he could speak or dictate or look a man in the eyes, his will remained paramount. First at Lyons, then at Narbonne, ambushes were prepared. Vain hope! The Cardinal was too well guarded, and his men, devotedly zealous because of the inherent power he exerted, would have let themselves be massacred rather than allow anyone to approach him. Moreover, he was aware of all that went on, just as he had always been aware of the conspiracies against him. He would long ago have exacted in the King's name stern measures of repression, but he still lacked definite proofs of the conspiracy: he wished to have these consolidated and indisputable, so as to leave in the King's mind no hesitation or regret. As it happened, Louis XIII began to weary of Cinq-Mars's insolence. 'I

THE LAST ASSAULT

spew him up! . . . ' he said of him at this moment, even when the favourite still believed himself the master.

On June 9, Richelieu arrived at Arles. He had left Narbonne, on May 27, after settling all his affairs and drawing up his will, well aware that, if his enemies were unable to lay him low, he was none the less a doomed man. From Arles, on June 11, he sent a trusted emissary, Chavigny, to the Secretary of State, des Noyers, who was at Narbonne, to which the King had returned. M. de Chavigny carried a document which the Cardinal had given him. He requested an audience with the King, whom Cinq-Mars at that moment was escorting. 'Sir,' said Chavigny, 'I have something to say to the King.' Louis XIII led him into a neighbouring apartment and, when he came out again, the King had signed the order for the arrest of Cinq-Mars and his accomplices. The document that Richelieu had sent was none other than the text of the secret treaty designed to betray Sedan to Spain, introduce enemy armies into France, promote civil war, and place Gaston d'Orléans upon the throne. After that, is there any need to vindicate Louis XIII? Critics have professed to see in this order of arrest proof of the subjection in which Richelieu held him, and a manifestation of hypocrisy, perfidy and cowardice. Has he not been accused of betraying friendship? . . . But where were the traitors in this affair? Neither Cinq-Mars, nor any of his accomplices, had the slightest excuse or extenuating circumstance in their favour, except their foolishness and blindness. Cinq-Mars had never understood his position at Court; he had never realised that Louis XIII was both a man and a King; the man was weak, no doubt, always restless, tormented, easily influenced, but only so far as his private life was concerned; as soon as the King came upon the stage, and

assumed the dignity of the throne and the grandeur of the monarchy, Louis XIII soared instantly above all his human distresses, and showed himself to be what he ought to be by the mystery of anointment that made him King. Cinq-Mars, touching the heart of the man, imagined that he had reached the soul of the King, whilst the King thought and acted on a plane to which no man, except Richelieu, had access.

Cinq-Mars was imprisoned at Montpellier, de Thou at Tarascon. The Duc de Bouillon was arrested. Gaston d'Orléans, preparing to shut himself up in Sedan, was so terrified that he lay low in his own domain, not daring to stir. For the purpose of judging these political prisoners, Richelieu once more used the procedure which he had always used in similar circumstances: he appointed commissaries, under the presidency of the chancellor, Séguier, and arranged for the trial to take place at Lyons. He proceeded there himself, by the Rhone, towing the barge that contained de Thou, who was conveyed from Valence in a carriage to Lyons, whither Cinq-Mars, escorted by a squadron of horse, had been taken direct from Montpellier. Here again legend has dishonoured reality by offering us the touching spectacle of the two inseparable friends dragged like slaves on a miserable pinnace behind the sumptuous vessel of the Cardinal. In reality, de Thou made this journey alone, from Tarascon to Valence. We are also asked to believe that, between Valence and Lyons, the Cardinal left the river and was transported in a monumental litter, and that walls had to be broken in order to provide a passage for him. The narrative of a witness, J. de Banne, who, on August 24, was present during Richelieu's passage to Viviers, fixes the truth on this point; and he also gives us such curious details concerning this

THE LAST ASSAULT

journey, that it would be a loss not to quote his pleasing account:

‘On the twenty-fourth of August 1642, Monseigneur the Cardinal de Richelieu slept at Viviers. He was travelling down the River Rhone, in a boat which had been fitted with a wooden apartment upholstered with scarlet velvet flowered in crimson, the groundwork being of gold. In the same boat there was an ante-chamber furnished in the same fashion; at the prow and at the stern of the boat were some soldiers of his guard wearing scarlet coats. . . . His Eminence was in a bed adorned with purple taffeta.

‘Monseigneur the Cardinal of Bichi, and Messieurs the Bishops of Nantes and Chartres were there with a large number of *abbés* and gentlemen, in other boats; in front of them there was an advance-guard frigate, and behind came another boat filled with musketeers and their officers. When they came alongside some isle, soldiers were sent ashore to see if there were any suspected persons to be found, and, not discovering any, they guarded the banks until two boats following had passed. These were filled with nobles and soldiers, well armed. Then came the boat of His Eminence, to the stern of which was attached a small covered boat containing M. de Thou, a prisoner guarded by an adjutant from the Royal guards, and a dozen of His Eminence’s guards.

‘Behind the boats came three barges containing the wearing apparel and the silver vessels of His Eminence.

‘On the banks of the Rhone, in Dauphiné, rode two companies of light horse, and as many on the borders of Languedoc and Vivarais. There was a very fine regiment of foot that went into the towns where His Eminence intended to enter or to sleep.

‘When his boat came alongside the shore, a wooden bridge was fixed, stretching from the boat to the shore. After this was made secure, the bed on which the said lord lay was carried ashore, for he was ill with a sore or ulcer on the arm. Six strong men carried the bed by means of

two bars, padded and provided with straps on the places where the men gripped them.

'On their shoulders and round their necks were certain trappings lined with cotton and covered with buff-leather, so that the straps or webbings around their necks were like stoles, which descended to the bars under which they were passed. Thus these men carried the bed and the said lord into the towns or into the houses where he intended to lodge.

'But what astonished everybody was the fact that he entered the houses by means of the windows; for before his arrival, masons were brought who broke down the windows of the houses, or made holes in the walls of the rooms where he intended to lodge, and then a wooden bridge was constructed stretching from the street to the windows or holes of his lodging. Thus, in his portable bed, he passed through the streets, and was carried up the bridge and placed into another bed prepared for him in his room, that his officers had adorned with rose and violet damask and very costly furniture. At Viviers he lodged in the house of Montarguy. The casement of the room overlooking the square had been removed, and the wooden bridge by means of which the ascent was made stretched from the shop of Noël de Vielh to the gap where the window had been, where the said lord was carried in the manner already explained.

'His chamber was guarded on all sides, also the vaults and the roof of the building where he slept.

'On Sunday the twenty-fifth of August, the said lord returned to his boat with the same procedure. . . . I saw him in his room; his aspect was very colourless on account of his sickness.'

When the Cardinal reached Lyons, on September 5, twenty-four hours after Cinq-Mars, the trial was well advanced. The Duc d'Orléans, craven as ever, hastened to supply a written confession, and an authentic transcript of the treaty with Spain. The Duc de Bouillon was no

THE LAST ASSAULT

less reticent. Cinq-Mars persisted in denying all the evidence brought forward, but could not modify the conviction of the judges formed on formal declarations and irrefutable documents. In the end, he realised the weakness of his defence and, on September 10, he also decided to confess.

On September 12, at seven o'clock in the morning, Henri d'Effiat was unanimously condemned to death, and de Thou to the same penalty by twelve votes to two. They were beheaded on the Place des Terreaux on that same day, about noon, and died with magnificent courage. Three days previously, Perpignan had fallen, the Spaniards had been driven from Roussillon, and Richelieu had the supreme joy of knowing that he would die having made victory certain.

'Perpignan,' he then wrote, 'is in the King's hands, and Monsieur "le grand" and Monsieur de Thou are in the other world. These are two results of God's goodness to the King and the State.'

Marie de Medici also had just ended her days at Cologne, so rounding off her sorry wanderings in exile. Louis XIII had still seven months to live, the Cardinal barely three. A reign was drawing to a close, a new phase of national history about to open, one of France's greatest servants was at his last breath.

By short stages, Richelieu returned to Paris. Day by day his body became weaker, his sufferings more grievous; he could scarcely move, but his energy never flagged, and, working without respite, he continued resolutely to rule the kingdom. He had given his whole life to his country, and never interrupted his task until the very instant of death. The King, sorely stricken, came to see him as soon as he knew that he was about to lose him; and he wished,

as a last proof of friendship, that the invalid would receive from his hands such nourishment as he could still swallow. A collaboration of eighteen years was about to be sundered, eighteen years of impassioned toil for the realisation of the same ideal, eighteen years of an indissoluble alliance to which the one had brought his genius, the other his kingship.

As he had been throughout his career, so now was Richelieu on the verge of death—lucid, master of himself, inflexible. Madame d'Aiguillon, his niece, to whom he was tenderly attached, could not contain her grief: he implored her, firmly but gently, to leave him, that he might be spared the sight of her tears. Conscious of his condition, feeling the end approaching, he made his confession and received the Sacrament.

'Do you forgive your enemies?' the curé of Saint-Eustache asked him.

'I have had none but those of the State,' he replied.

And these were his last words: they seem to contain the whole meaning and secret of his life. From the day when he achieved supremacy, he doffed his own humanity, and had no wish to be other than the inflexible servant of France. It was not in his own name that he loved or hated, for he had ceased to exist as a man, and he judged other men only according to the help or hindrance that they brought to his work.

He passed away on December 4, 1642. When the Pope received the news of his death he exclaimed: 'If there be a God, the Cardinal de Richelieu will have many accounts to render to Him. If there be none, he has lived a glorious life.'

He had lived a glorious life. As for his accounts, he had rendered them, in one sentence:

'I have had no enemies but those of the State.'

CHAPTER XIV

POST MORTEM

WHEN, at last, this man disappeared who for so many years had directed the State, and wielded powers more dictatorial than had ever been granted to any other minister, the first impression was of a great gap; and it was difficult to believe in the reality of a death so often desired and so long expected. His countless enemies felt relief, deliverance, boundless hopes. His heritage was great enough to yield satisfaction to all ambitions, because he himself had owned everything. The nobility, the Parlement, even the clergy awaited the reaction which would restore their privileges. Was it not said that the King himself chafed under this strict tutelage? That free at last from the chains he had borne so long, he would prove his independence by expelling all the Cardinal's creatures and break with all his policy? All eyes were upon him, watching for the gesture of liberation.

Once again Louis XIII, confronted by a decision to be taken, displayed that lofty vision which had always made him the defender of Richelieu, the supporter of his ideas. Nothing was modified in the councils of the government, nor in the political principles left behind by Richelieu. If Louis had been, as he was sometimes declared to be, the Cardinal's slave, he knew that this bondage had ensured his greatness and the glory of his throne; and during the short time he had still to reign, he scrupulously remained

RICHELIEU

loyal to it. Richelieu had nominated his own successor—Cardinal Mazarin, who was neither known to nor respected by the Court. Louis XIII appointed him as Minister of State, and a member of the future Council of Regency. The future was safeguarded. There, clad in the cloak of purple, was the advancing figure of the man whose lot it would be to harvest the crop on the soil tilled, renewed and fertilised by the true maker of the French monarchy.

APPENDIX

WILL

OF HIS EMINENCE

ARMAND-JEAN DU PLESSIS

CARDINAL DUC DE RICHELIEU

Dictated at Narbonne on May 23, 1642

BEFORE Pierre Falconis, legal notary in the town of Narbonne, was present in person the most eminent Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal Duc de Richelieu and de Fronsac, peer of France, Commander of the Order of the Holy Spirit, Grand Master, Chief and Superintendent-General of Navigation and Commerce of this realm, Governor and Lieutenant-General for the King in Brittany; who sent for the said notary to attend him at the residence of the Viscount of the said town, where he is at present in his bed, sick, in order to receive his last Will and Testament, the disposition of which is as follows:

I, Armand-Jean du Plessis de Richelieu, Cardinal of the Holy Church of Rome, declare, giving thanks to God Who, while afflicting me with great sickness of body, has preserved in full the powers of my mind and judgment, that I am resolved to make my last Will and Testament.

FIRSTLY

I beseech Him, by His Divine Grace, not to enter into judgment against me, and to pardon my faults by the application of the precious blood of Jesus Christ His Son, who died on the Cross for the redemption of men, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin His Mother and all

RICHELIEU

the Saints, who, having dwelt in the Church of Rome, Catholic and Apostolic, in which alone salvation may be found, are now glorified in Paradise.

When my body shall be free of my soul, I desire and ordain that it shall be interred in the new church of the Sorbonne of Paris, leaving to the executors of my will, hereafter named, to make such arrangements for my funeral and obsequies as may seem proper to them.

I desire and ordain that all the gold and silver money that I shall leave at the time of my decease, in whatever place it may be, shall be placed in the hands of Madame the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, my niece, and M. de Noyers, Councillor of the King in his Council of State, and his managing secretary, except the sum of fifteen hundred thousand *livres* that I desire to be placed in His Majesty's hands, immediately after my death, as I shall hereafter ordain.

I request Madame the Duchesse d'Aiguillon my niece, and M. de Noyers, immediately after my death, to pay and discharge my debts, if any should then exist, with the money which I have above ordained shall be placed in their hands; and, my debts being paid, with the remaining sum, to perform works of piety beneficial to the public, which I have already indicated to them, and to M. Lescot appointed by the King to the bishopric of Chartres, my confessor; and I declare that they shall render no account to my heirs, or to others, of the sums which shall have been placed into their hands, and of which they shall have disposed.

I declare that, by contract on June 6, 1636, before Guerreau and Parque, I have given to the Crown my town mansion known as the Palais Cardinal, my golden chaplet embellished with diamonds, my large cabinet of engraved silver, and the large diamond which I bought from Lopès. All of which the King has been willing, by his kindness, to accept at my very humble and very insistent supplication, and which I make over to him by this present will, and ordain that the contract shall be executed in all its points.

APPENDIX

I very humbly beg His Majesty to accept eight suites of tapestry, and three beds, which I beg Madame the Duchesse d'Aiguillon my niece, and M. de Noyers, to choose from amongst my furniture, in order to provide part of the furniture for the principal apartments of the said Palais Cardinal.

Also I beg him to accept as a gift the building which is in front of the Palais Cardinal, the which I acquired from the late M. le Commandeur de Sillery in order to make, on its site, a square in front of the said Palais Cardinal.

I also very humbly beg His Majesty to manage well the sum of fifteen hundred thousand *livres*, which I have mentioned above, the which I can say, with truth, has rendered me good service in the greatest affairs of State, so much so that if this money had not been at my disposal, some designs which have succeeded happily would in all probability have miscarried, for which reason I beg His Majesty to keep such a sum always by him, to employ it upon pressing occasions, when he has no other money in his coffers.

And concerning any surplus which may exist, now and in the future, whatever its nature may be, I desire and ordain that it may be apportioned and divided as he may think fit.

I grant and bequeath to Armand de Maillé, my nephew and godson, son of Urbain de Maillé, Marquis de Brézé, Marshal of France, and of Nicole du Plessis, my second sister, and in this, I appoint him my heir, all the rights which he may claim in all the lands and other property entailed in my succession, at the time of my decease, as follows:

Firstly, I grant and bequeath to him my duchy and peerage of Fronsac, and Caumont united to it, together with all that depends upon them, and which shall be united to them and depend upon them when it shall please God to dispose of me.

Moreover, I grant to him the land and marquisate of Granille, its appurtenances and dependencies.

RICHELIEU

Item, I grant and bequeath to him the County of Beaufort in Vallée.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him the sum of three hundred thousand *livres* which is in the castle of Saumur, which sum I desire and ordain to be employed in acquiring titled lands, of the dignity at least of Castellany, for the employment, by my said nephew, of the said lands according to the conditions of the instructions and substitutions which will be hereafter affixed to this my will.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him the land and barony of Fresnes, in the region of Anjou, that I have acquired from the Marquis de Sezé by contract drawn up before Parquet and Guerreau, notaries in the Châtelet at Paris.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him the farm of Poids in Normandy, which is at present let out on lease at fifty thousand *livres* per annum or thereabouts.

I desire and ordain that the discharge which I have heretofore given to the said Marshal de Brézé by deed executed before Guerreau and Parquet, notaries, on August 30, 1632, and for all that he shall owe me at the time of my decease, shall hold good, and must be faithfully carried into effect, not desiring that my said nephew, Armand de Maillé, son of the said Marshal, his brothers and others who will have a share in my estate, shall claim anything from him, neither from capital nor from arrears of rents and interests on the sums which I have paid to the creditors of the house of Brézé, of which I hold the rights of transfer, wishing only that the movables of the house may remain affected and mortgaged by the principal and arrears of the said debts which are due and which will become due hereafter to the advantage of the children of the said Marshal de Brézé and of my said sister his wife and their descendants, as is already contained in the said deed, without which the influence and discretion of the said mortgage might prevent the said Marshal de Brézé from enjoying the use of the said goods during his lifetime.

I grant and bequeath to Madame the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, my niece, daughter of the deceased René de Vignerot,

APPENDIX

and of Dame Françoise du Plessis, my eldest sister, all the rights which she may possess and claim in all the property entailed in my succession; besides, I have given to her by her marriage contract, and in this I appoint her my heir, thus: the house where she lives at present, commonly called the Petit Luxembourg, situated in the suburb of Saint-Germain, adjoining the palace of the Queen, the king's mother; my house and land of Ruel, and all the landed property and Crown rights, which I have and shall have in the said place, at the time of my decease, both those which I have held there for a considerable time, and those which I have acquired by exchange with the Abbot and monks of Saint-Denis in France, on condition that after her decease, my said house of Ruel, with its appurtenances and the said Crown rights, shall revert *to the children of my nephew du Pont de Courlay, who shall be my heir, and who shall bear the name and arms of Richelieu*, subject to the institutions and substitutions which shall be hereafter appended; and as for the house commonly called the Petit Luxembourg, it shall revert, after the decease of my said niece the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, to whomsoever shall be Duc de Fronsac, subject to the conditions of the institutions and substitutions which shall be hereafter appended.

Item, I grant to her the demesne of Pontoise and any other rights which I may have in the said town at the time of my decease.

Item, I grant to her the rents which I receive from the five large farms in France, which amount to sixty thousand *livres* or thereabouts, the which, after the decease of my said niece, shall revert to my said nephew du Pont de Courlay, who shall be my heir, if the said rent should then be found in the normal way; and in case the property should have been bought back, the money coming from this, or from the landed property or rents, on which it may have been employed, shall revert to my said nephew.

Item, I grant and bequeath to my said niece the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, all the crystal, pictures and other pieces which are at present or will be hereafter, at the time of my

RICHELIEU

decease, in the chief cabinet of the said house commonly called the Petit Luxembourg, and which serve there as ornaments, without including the silver plate which I have already disposed of, which may be there at the time of my death.

I also grant to her all my rings and jewels, with the sole exception of what I have herein left to the Crown, together with a vermillion cabinet of silver newly gilded, weighing five hundred and thirty-five marks four grains.

I grant and bequeath to François de Vignerot, M. du Pont de Courlay, my nephew, and in this I appoint him my heir, thus: the sum of two hundred thousand *livres*, which will be paid to him by the order of the executors of my will, on condition that he employs this sum in acquiring lands, to be enjoyed by him during his lifetime, and, after his decease, to be possessed by Armand de Vignerot, his eldest son, or to whomsoever after him shall be Duc de Richelieu, according to the conditions of the institutions and substitutions hereafter declared.

I grant and bequeath to the said Armand de Vignerot, and in this I appoint him my heir, thus: my duchy and peerage of Richelieu, its appurtenances and dependencies with all the lands which I have added or shall add to this before my decease.

Item, I grant to him the land and barony of Barbezieur which I have acquired from M. and Madame Viguiet.

Item, I grant to him the land and principality of Mortaigne, which I have acquired from M. de Lorné, Secretary of State.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him the county of Cosnac, the baronies of Coze, Saugeon, and Alvert.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him the land of La Ferté-Bernard, which I have acquired by decree from M. the Duc de Villars.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him the demesne of Hiers-en-Brouage, which I enjoy by engagement.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him the Hôtel de Richelieu, which I have ordered and wish to be built, adjoining the

APPENDIX

Palais Cardinal, according to the conditions of the institutions and substitutions which shall hereafter be declared.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him my tapestry with the story of Lucrece, which I have bought from M. the Duc de Chevreuse, together with all the images, statues, busts, pictures, crystal, cabinets, tables and other pieces of furniture which are at present in the seven rooms of the porter's lodge of the Palais Cardinal, and in the little gallery attached to it, in order to furnish and adorn the said Hôtel de Richelieu, when it shall be built, wishing and intending that all the above-mentioned articles shall remain perpetually attached to the said Hôtel de Richelieu, as appurtenances and dependencies.

Item, I grant and bequeath to him besides the above, all my other goods, movable and real, Crown rights, or demesnes which I possess by engagement, and all the goods in general that I shall have at the time of my decease, whatever their nature and quality may be, which I have not disposed of by this present will, all according to the institutions and substitutions which shall be hereafter appended; and, for this purpose, I wish that after my decease he will make an inventory along with my testamentary executors or such other persons as they may consider proper, of all my furniture which they may find, in the Hôtel de Richelieu and in the Palais Cardinal, as well as in my house at Richelieu, of which he who will be Duc de Richelieu shall take charge.

I desire and proclaim that all the above legacies which I have made to the said Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, shall be subject to the express condition that he shall assume *the sole name of du Plessis de Richelieu*, and that neither my said nephew nor his descendants who shall succeed to my estate, by virtue of this present will, shall take any other name, or alter the arms of the House, without forfeiting the institution and substitution made in their favour.

I desire and proclaim that Armand de Vignerot, or those of my grand-nephews, children of François de Vignerot,

RICHELIEU

my nephew, who shall succeed to my estate, by virtue of this my will, shall allow each year to the said François de Vignerot, their father, the sum of thirty thousand *livres*, during his lifetime, to be taken from the property which I have herein bequeathed to them, on the condition that the said M. François de Vignerot, M. du Pont de Courlay, my nephew, shall not enjoy the said thirty thousand *livres* of income, except on the terms and conditions hereafter declared, from the time that my heirs shall begin to enjoy my property entirely, and that the payment of the said thirty thousand *livres* to him shall be made by the order of those who shall have control of the said property until his said son shall attain his majority, or by the order of his said son when he shall be of age.

Item, I grant and bequeath to the said Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, according to the clauses and conditions of the institutions and substitutions which shall be hereafter appended, my library, not only as it is at present, but as it shall be at the time of my decease, declaring that I desire it to be installed in the Hôtel de Richelieu which I have begun to build, adjoining the Palais Cardinal; and, my design being to have the said library as complete as possible, so that it shall serve not only my family, but the public as well, I desire and ordain that, at the time of my death, a general inventory shall be made by such persons as my testamentary executors may judge proper, by calling in two doctors of the Sorbonne, who shall be deputed by their colleagues to be present at the making of the said inventory; the which being made, I desire that it shall be placed, one copy in my library, signed by my testamentary executors and the said doctors of the Sorbonne, and another copy likewise placed in the said house of the Sorbonne, signed as above.

And, so that the said library may be conserved in its entirety, I desire and ordain that the said inventory shall be amended and verified every year by two doctors who shall be deputed by the Sorbonne, and that a librarian shall be placed in charge, at a salary of a thousand *livres*

APPENDIX

per annum, whose salary and emoluments I desire to be, on a yearly basis, in preference to every other charge, from quarter to quarter and in advance, on the revenues from the houses built or to be built around the park of the Palais Cardinal, but not forming part of the said palace; and I desire and proclaim that in consideration of the said thousand *livres* of emoluments he shall manage and maintain the said library, keep it in good condition, and allow admission, at certain hours of the day, to men of letters and erudition, to see the books and to study them in the library, without taking away any books; and should it not have a librarian at the time of my death, I desire and ordain that the Sorbonne shall name three to the said Armand de Vignerot and his successors, who shall be Ducs de Richelieu, in order to choose whichever of the three they may judge to be the most suitable; that this procedure shall always be observed when it is necessary to appoint a new librarian.

And, moreover, for the preservation of the interior and the books of the said library, it will have need of frequent cleaning, and there shall be chosen, by my said nephew, a man suitable for the purpose, who shall be obliged to sweep out the said library once a day, and to dust the books or the cupboards in which they are kept; and, in order to maintain him, and to furnish the brooms and other things necessary for cleaning, I desire that his wages shall be four hundred *livres* per annum, on the same basis as those of the librarian, and in the same form, to be paid, like those of the librarian, under the management and authority of my said nephew and his successors in possession of the said Hôtel de Richelieu.

And inasmuch as it is necessary to maintain a library in its completeness, to add to it from time to time good books newly published or old ones that it may lack, I desire and ordain that the sum of a thousand *livres* per annum shall be employed in the purchase of books, on the advice of the doctors who will be deputed every year by the Sorbonne to make an inventory of the said library, the

which sum of a thousand *livres* shall be likewise taken, in preference to all other charges, from the revenue of the rentals of the houses which will be built around the said park of the Palais Cardinal.

I declare that my intention and will is, that, at the time of my decease, should the said Armand de Vignerot, or, through his default, whichever of his brothers shall succeed to my estate, by virtue of this my will, not have attained his majority, that my niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, shall have the administration and control of his person as well as of the said property which I grant him, until he shall have reached his majority, and that my said niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, shall render no account to the said Armand de Vignerot, or to any other person whomsoever; and lest my said niece, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, should predecease me, or should die before the said Armand de Vignerot, or whichever of his brothers shall then be my heir, has reached his majority, I desire and ordain that the said property shall be administered by my testamentary executors, and that they shall render no account to anyone whomsoever.

Item, I grant and bequeath to the said Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, the sum of four hundred and forty and as many thousand *livres* as I have lent, by deed of composition, to my nephew du Pont de Courlay his father, to pay the debts contracted by him, together with all that the said M. du Pont, my nephew, owes me, whether from arrears of the said composition or from any other cause whatsoever and whatever may be the amount of the said debts at the time of my decease, subject to the condition, nevertheless, that my grand-nephew shall make no demand for the said sums, principal or interest, to the said M. du Pont de Courlay his father during his lifetime, thus to reserve for himself and to possess his lands after his death; if it should happen that the lands and property of the said M. du Pont de Courlay, my nephew, shall be, during his lifetime, seized under warrant, at the demand of his creditors, in this case I desire and ordain that the said Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, shall resist the

APPENDIX

seizure of the property, and shall also become the highest bidder, if he should consider this advisable; and should he be the highest bidder for the said property, or should it be sold, he must make an order on the money produced by the sale; I desire and ordain that my said nephew du Pont de Courlay shall enjoy during his lifetime the income from the said auctioned property, or from the sums on which my grand-nephew shall have made an order.

And, inasmuch as it has pleased God to bless my works and to cause them to be esteemed by the King, my good master, who has rewarded them with a munificence beyond anything I could have hoped for, I have considered in making my present dispositions, making it obligatory for my heirs to preserve the settlement which I have conferred on my family, so that it may long maintain the dignity and splendour which the King has been pleased to bestow upon it, and that posterity may know that, if I have served it faithfully, it has cause, by virtue of royal favour, to love me and to load me with kindnesses.

For this purpose, I declare and proclaim that all the above-mentioned property which I have bequeathed and granted, shall be subject to the following substitutions.

Firstly, I substitute for Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, son of François Vignerot M. du Pont de Courlay, my nephew, in all the above-mentioned property, movable and real, which I have granted to him, his eldest son; I substitute the eldest of the males of the said family, and from the eldest to the eldest, guarding always the order and prerogative of seniority.

And, should the said Armand de Vignerot die without male issue or should the male line come to an end, I substitute for him whichever of his brothers shall be the eldest in the family, or, by his default, the eldest of the male children of the said brother, according to the order of primogeniture, and guarding always the prerogative of seniority; and should the said brother or his male children die without male issue, and the male line come to an end, I substitute for him whichever of his brothers or nephews

RICHELIEU

shall be the eldest males in the family, guarding always the order of primogeniture so long as the male line of François de Vignerot M. du Pont de Courlay shall last.

I declare that I desire and ordain that whichever of the male children of my nephew du Pont de Courlay, or of his descendants, shall be an ecclesiastic, if he is *in sacris*, shall not be included in the above institution and substitution, to enjoy the aforesaid, although he may be of age; but I desire and ordain that in all the degrees of institution and substitution, whoever shall be of age and the eldest of the family, after the one who shall be an ecclesiastic and *in sacris* at the time of the operation of the substitution, shall enjoy in his place the rights of institution and substitution according to the order of primogeniture.

And, should it happen that there shall be no male descendant of my said nephew du Pont de Courlay, and that the male line springing from him shall become extinct, I call into the said substitution Armand de Maillé, my nephew, or whichever of his male descendants on the male side shall be Duc de Fronsac, by augmentation of the property instituted and entailed above, bringing under the same conditions the institutions and substitutions of the other property which I have bequeathed to him, all on the condition that my said nephew Armand de Maillé and his descendants who shall come under the said substitution shall take the sole name of du Plessis de Richelieu without any other adjunction.

Item, I substitute for the said Armand de Maillé, in all the above-mentioned property which I have bequeathed to him, the eldest son who shall be the issue of legitimate marriage, and for the said eldest son I substitute the eldest of his male issue, and from the eldest to the eldest, except those who shall be ecclesiastics *in sacris*, as mentioned above.

And should my said nephew, Armand de Maillé, die without male issue, and should his male line become extinct, I call into the said substitution Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, or those of his male descendants

APPENDIX

who shall then be Duc de Richelieu; and in default of males in the family of my said M. Armand de Vignerot, I call into the substitution the eldest male of the family of my said nephew du Pont de Courlay, descendants from him on the male side according to the order of primogeniture, by augmentation of the property instituted and substituted, and to make them of the same nature and conditions as the institutions and substitutions of the other property which I have bequeathed to them.

And, should the male line of my said nephew du Pont de Courlay and of Armand de Maillé, my nephew, become extinct, so that the two families have no male children descended from males by legitimate marriage to succeed to my estate, according to the order prescribed above, I call into the substitution of the property to which I have instituted Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, the eldest son of the eldest daughter issuing from the eldest, or whomsoever shall represent him, and then the eldest of the next daughter, according to the order of primogeniture of males, to the exclusion of those who are *in sacris*.

And, should it happen, as has been said above, that the line shall become extinct, in the family of Armand de Maillé, my nephew, as well as in that of my said nephew du Pont de Courlay, I call into the substitution of the property in which I have instituted the said Armand de Maillé, my nephew, the eldest son of the eldest daughter, then the next, or whichever male shall represent him; and from males to males, to the exclusion of those *in sacris*, guarding always, from step to step, the primogeniture of males, and under the same charges, conditions, institutions and substitutions as above.

And, should all the male descendants of the daughters of my said nephew du Pont de Courlay die without male issue, I substitute for them whichever of my successors shall be Duc de Fronsac, by virtue of my will, with augmentations of the institutions and substitutions; and should the male descendants of the daughters springing from Armand de Maillé, my nephew, die without male issue, I

RICHELIEU

substitute for them whichever of my successors shall then possess, by virtue of my will, the duchy of Richelieu, with augmentations of the institutions and substitutions.

I beg those of the family of de Vignerot and of de Maillé to whom the property that I have entailed will belong, to be willing to renew, when the need arises, the said institutions and substitutions, according to my intention as above which I believe they will be willing to do, both in consideration of the great benefits which they will have received from me, and for the honour of their family.

And, as my intention is that the lands of the duchies and peerages of Richelieu, and of Fronsac and Caumont, their appurtenances and dependencies, shall remain in my family in their entirety, without being split up for any consideration, I forbid, as far as I am able to, my said grand-nephew, Armand de Vignerot, and Armand de Maillé, my nephew, their descendants and all others who shall succeed to the said lands, as much by institution as by substitution, by virtue of the present will, all detraction of *quatre légitime*, jointure, or otherwise, in any way whatsoever, on the said lands of the duchies and peerages, desiring that the said lands and seigniories shall remain in their entirety to whomsoever shall be substituted in his order, so that they will not be dismembered or divided for any cause whatsoever.

I desire and ordain that my nephew du Pont de Courlay be satisfied, as his rights in my estate, with the sum of two hundred thousand *livres* which I have herein bequeathed to him, and with the thirty thousand *livres* per annum which I have also bequeathed to him from the property bequeathed by this my will to Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, his son, together with the enjoyment of the sums of money which he owes me, as I have herein disposed of them.

Item, I declare that should my said nephew François de Vignerot, M. du Pont de Courlay, contest this my disposition, and should the duchy of Richelieu be granted to him as part and portion of what I have not disposed, in this case I revoke the said gift of two hundred thousand

APPENDIX

livres made in his favour, and, besides, I revoke all the institutions which I have made concerning the said duchy of Richelieu in favour of Armand de Vignerot, his son, and of those of the family of de Vignerot, and desire and ordain that Armand de Maillé, my nephew, shall be called into the substitution of the said duchy after the decease of the said François de Vignerot, M. du Pont de Courlay, my nephew, to the exclusion of all the descendants of my said nephew du Pont de Courlay, and that he shall enjoy, at the time of the operation of my succession, the parts and portions of the said duchy of which I am able to dispose; and in so far as there is need, should the said François de Vignerot, my nephew, contest this my will, I grant to Armand de Maillé the said parts and portions of which I can dispose, with the Hôtel de Richelieu that I have ordered to be built adjoining the Palais Cardinal, together with all the movable property at the time of my decease, in the house of my duchy of Richelieu, as well as in the Palais Cardinal and the said Hôtel de Richelieu, and this by augmentation of the institutions or substitutions, so as to bring them under the same disposition and the same conditions as the institutions and substitutions of the other property herein bequeathed to him, on condition that he shall take the sole name and bear only the arms of the House du Plessis de Richelieu, as before explained.

And, concerning other property, movable and real, of which I have disposed above in favour of Armand de Vignerot, my grand-nephew, I desire and ordain that he shall enjoy it as I have ordained above, according to the conditions of the institutions and substitutions above appended, subject to the condition, nevertheless, that this last disposition shall not have effect except my said nephew François de Vignerot, M. du Pont de Courlay, contest my will.

And, inasmuch as in the property of which I have disposed above, some of it perhaps may be in the King's domain, and other property and rentals may be repurchased, I desire and ordain that in case of repurchase of

RICHELIEU

all or part of the property of this nature, it shall be subject to the institutes or entails, and the amount produced shall be replaced by the purchaser, in acquiring the heritages, in order to bring the said purchased property under the same conditions, institutions and substitutions which I have above granted and bequeathed, and this, within six months of the day of repayment, if one can be found to do this; in default of which, the money produced by the said repurchases and repayments shall be placed in the hands of solvent persons until this shall be done, with the consent of whoever shall be the next called in to the substitution of the said property.

I have made no mention in this my will of my niece the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, inasmuch as by her marriage contract she has renounced her rights to my estate, in consideration of what I gave her as a dowry, with which I desire and ordain that she will be satisfied.

My intention is that the executors of my will and my said niece the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, having the management during three years, counting from the day when it shall please God to dispose of me, of two-thirds of the income from my property, the other remaining with my heirs so far as each may be concerned, shall pay with the said two-thirds those of my debts that remain to be settled, and my legacies and expenses for the buildings which I have ordained shall be constructed and completed, thus: the church of the Sorbonne of Paris, its ornaments and furnishings, my tomb which I desire shall be made in the said church, after the design approved by my niece the Duchesse d'Aiguillon and M. de Noyers; the college of the Sorbonne, after the design which I have drawn up with M. de Noyers and M. Mercier, architect; the purchase of necessary sites, for the erection of the said college as well as for the garden of the Sorbonne, following the usual appraisements and estimates; also the expense of the Hôtel de Richelieu that I have ordained to be built adjoining the Palais Cardinal, of the library of the said *hôtel*, the foundations of which are laid, the which I beg M. de Noyers to complete care-

APPENDIX

fully after the last design and estimate drawn up with Tiriôt, master mason; and of the purchase of all the books that will be required. I beg him also to repair, enlarge and adorn the house of the fathers of the Mission which I have founded at Richelieu, and to buy a garden for them in an enclosure in the town of Richelieu, as near as possible to their house, of the size which I have ordained; also to buy fountains and other accommodations already begun, necessary for the completion of my buildings and gardens at Richelieu; all from the said two-thirds of income from my said property, already mentioned, and neither my niece nor M. de Noyers shall render an account of these expenses to any person whomsoever; and, although I have already sufficiently endowed, at the said Richelieu, the fathers of the Mission with a house to hold twenty priests, and arranged for them to be employed in missions in Poitou following their institution, I yet give them the sum of sixty thousand *livres*, so that they may devote themselves to the said missions, and that they shall be obliged to pray to God for the repose of my soul; subject to their employing the said sum of sixty thousand *livres* in buying heritages, to be of the same nature as the other property of the foundation.

I forbid my heirs to form alliances with houses which are not truly noble, leaving them enough to enable them to have more regard for birth and virtue than for easy circumstances and property.

And, inasmuch as experience tells us that heirs do not always follow the footsteps of those whom they succeed, desiring to have more care for the preservation of the dignity which I leave to mine, rather than for their property, I recommend strictly to the said Armand de Vignerot and Armand de Maillé, and to all those who will enjoy after them the said duchies, peerages and property that I have herein entailed for them, that they must never depart from the obedience which they owe to the King and his successors, on no pretext and on account of no dissatisfaction whatsoever; and I declare in my conscience that, if

RICHELIEU

I could see beforehand any of them succumbing to such a fault, I would leave to him no part of my estate.

I grant and bequeath to M. du Plessis de Sivray, my cousin, the sum of sixty thousand *livres* which is due to me by M. the Comte de Charost, captain of the King's body-guard, concerning which I proclaim that neither the said M. du Plessis de Sivray, nor any of my heirs, shall demand any interest on the said sum of sixty thousand *livres*; except only that the said M. de Sivray shall be paid the aforesaid principal, within a year of my decease.

To show my satisfaction with the services rendered to me by my domestics and servants,

I grant to M. Didier, my almoner, fifteen hundred *livres*;

To M. de Bar, ten thousand *livres*;

To M. de Mause, six thousand *livres*;

To M. de Belesbat, because I have not yet given him anything, ten thousand *livres*;

To Beaugensy, three thousand *livres*;

To Lestoublou, three thousand *livres*;

To M. de Valvoisin, because I have not yet given him anything, twelve thousand *livres*;

To Gueille, two thousand *livres*;

To M. Citois, six thousand *livres*;

To Berthereau, six thousand *livres*;

To Blouin, ten thousand *livres*;

To Desbournais, my valet, six thousand *livres*; and I desire that he will become porter under my grand-nephew du Pont de Courlay, in the Palais Cardinal;

To Cousin, six thousand *livres*;

To L'Espolette and to Prévost, three thousand *livres* each;

To M. Buzenot, my treasurer, four thousand *livres*;

To Picot, six thousand *livres*;

To Robert, three thousand *livres*;

To Messieurs de Grand and de Saint-Léger, my equerries, each three thousand *livres*; and, besides, my two coaches with the two teams of horses, my light carriage and the three mules which serve it, to be divided equally between my two equerries;

APPENDIX

To Chamarande and du Plessis, each three thousand *livres*;

To Villaudry, five hundred *livres*;

To Deroques, eighteen trained horses, after the twelve best of my stable have been chosen for my relatives;

To M. Defort, equerry, six thousand *livres*;

To Grandpré, captain at Richelieu, three thousand *livres*;

To La Jeunesse, porter at Richelieu, three thousand *livres*;

To the lad Mulot, who writes under my secretary, M. Charpentier, fifteen hundred *livres*;

To La Garde, three thousand *livres*;

To my head butler, two thousand *livres*;

To my head cook, two thousand *livres*;

To my head coachman, fifteen hundred *livres*;

To my head muleteer, twelve hundred *livres*;

To each of my footmen, six hundred *livres*;

And to all the other officers of my household generally, thus: of the kitchen, cellar and stable, six years' wages, further, this will be due to them on the day of my decease.

I do not grant anything to M. Charpentier, my secretary, because I have provided for him during my lifetime; but I desire to render him this testimony, that during the long time he has served me, I have not known a better man or a more loyal servant.

Neither do I grant anything to my other secretary, M. Chéré, having likewise provided for him, being also satisfied with the services he has rendered.

I grant to Baron de La Broye, heir of the late M. Barbin, whom I know to be in need, the sum of thirty thousand *livres*;

I beg my brother, the Cardinal of Lyons, to give to M. de Sadilly the priory of Coussaye which I possess at present, and which is for his nomination.

And, to execute the present will and all that depends upon it, I have appointed and elected M. the Chancellor and Messieurs Bouthillier, superintendent, and de Noyers,

RICHELIEU

Secretary of State, or those of them who shall survive me; desiring that they shall have particular care that nothing shall be omitted from all the above, which is my last will and testament, the which I have made as it is herein given, after much serious thought, because the greater part of my property being derived from presents given to me by their Majesties, for serving them faithfully, and from my thrift, I can use it as seems best to me; moreover, I leave to each of my legitimate heirs much more property than that which is mine by succession; and, so that there shall be no dispute among them, and that this my last will and testament shall be executed properly, I desire and ordain that, should any of my said heirs or legatees claim that there is any ambiguity or obscurity in this my present will, that my brother, the Cardinal of Lyons, and my testamentary executors, all together, or those of them who shall be then alive, shall explain my intention, and give a definite judgment on any dispute that may arise in connection with this present will; and that my said heirs and legatees shall be bound to acquiesce in their judgment, on pain of being deprived of the portion which I grant and leave to them, which in this case shall go to those who obey the judgment given by those mentioned above.

I very humbly beg the King to receive my relatives who will have the honour to serve him when occasion arises, according to the dignity of his truly royal Court; and as a mark of his esteem for the memory of a creature who has never had anything to recommend him but his service.

And I could not satisfy my conscience, if, notwithstanding failing health, having served successfully in difficult times and in difficult affairs, having experienced good and bad fortune on diverse occasions, I did not render to the King what his kindness and my birth particularly oblige me to render; that I have never been unmindful of what is due to the Queen, his mother, whatever slanders may be imputed to me on this subject.

I declare, in order to make secure this my present will, that I revoke all others previously made; and, should one

APPENDIX

be found hereafter revoking this present one, I revoke it, if it is not written in my hand before a notary, and if the following words: *Satiabor cum apparuerit gloria tua*, are not inserted at the end immediately before my signature; and inasmuch as I am unable to write or sign, on account of my said sickness and an abscess on my right arm, I have dictated, and witnessed the signing of my present will, containing sixteen folios and the present page, by the said Pierre Falconis, legal notary, after it has been read to me distinctly and intelligibly.

Made in the said mansion of the Vicomte, on the twenty-third of the month of May, in the year one thousand six hundred and forty-two, after noon; signed FALCONIS, with paraph.

In the year one thousand six hundred and forty-two, on the twenty-third day of May, after noon, in the mansion of the Vicomte de Narbonne, in the reign of His Christian Majesty Louis XIII, King of France and Navarre, before me, notary, was present in his person Monseigneur Armand-Jean du Plessis, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Duc de Richelieu, and de Fronsac, peer of France, Commander of the Order of the Holy Spirit, Grand-Master, Chief and Superintendent-General for His Majesty in Brittany, the which, sick but sound of mind, has caused to be written in the sixteen folios and a half of paper, closed and sealed with his Arms on Spanish sealing-wax by me, the notary, his last will and testament which I, the said notary, have signed, the said lord the Cardinal not being able to write or sign his will with his hand because of sickness and an abscess on his arm, the contents of which will His Eminence desires to be held good by right of declaration, sealed and formal, codicil, deed of gift, on account of death and all such other forms as will enable the right to remain valid, notwithstanding all observances of right which at present His Eminence is able to constrain; and all other laws and customs to the contrary; and has begged the witnesses named below to attest his said present will, and I, the notary, have read to him

RICHELIEU

the present document, conceded in presence of Monsiegnur the Most Eminent Cardinal Mazarini; M. Lescot, appointed by His Majesty to the bishopric of Chartres; d'Aumont, Abbot of Uzerches; de Péréfixe, household steward of my said Lord Cardinal Duke; Delabarbe, secretary to the King's council and treasurer of France at Paris; Le Roi, His Majesty's secretary, household and public; de Rennefort, Abbot of La Clarté Dieu; undersigned, and I, the said notary, have signed with these witnesses, my said Lord Cardinal Duke not being able to sign the present document, on account of sickness. Signed, the Cardinal Mazarini. J. Lescot. R. d'Aumont. J. Delabarbe. D. de Rennefort. Le Roi. Hardouin de Péréfixe. Falconis.



INDEX

A

Adolphus, Gustavus, 231-5, 238,
251
Aiguillon, Duchesse d', 282, 286, 289,
294, 300
Alais, Peace of, 180
Altmark, Truce of, 232
Amboise, Bussy d', 185
Ancre, Marshal d', see Concini
Angers, Treaty of, 126
Angoulême, Duc d', 167
Angoulême, Treaty of, 124
Anjou, Duc d', 13
Aquinas, St. Thomas, 32
Augustine, St., 44
Austria, Anne of, 85, 86, 91, 146, 147,
150, 155, 156, 170, 263, 273
Auvergne, Comte d', 105

B

Banne, J. de, 278; narrative of, 279
Barberini, Antonio, 189, 194
Barbin, 94
Baschet, Armand, 47
Bassompierre, Marshal de, 167, 196
Bellay, Joachim du, 31
Bentivoglio, the Papal nuncio, 126
Beuvron, Baron de, 184, 185
Bichi, Cardinal of, 279
Blas, Ruy, 97
Bois-Dauphin, 86
Boisrobert, 263
Borromeo, St. Charles, 42
Bouillon, Duc de, 61, 84, 85, 104, 106,
115, 270, 275, 280
Bourges, Madame de, 37, 38
Bouteville, 184, 185
Bouthellier, Dean of Luçon, 51, 54,
55, 58, 62, 152

Brézé, Marquis de, 287, 288
Brief Instructions, see Richelieu,
Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de
Buckingham, Duke of, 146, 147,
154-6, 159, 163, 165, 166, 170,
171, 263

C

Cæsar, Julius, 129, 221
Casale, siege of, 179
Catechism of the Diocese of Luçon—see
Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis,
Duc de
Champagne, Philippe de, 131, 132
Chapelles, Comte de, 186
Charles I, of England, 154, 156, 170
Charles IX, 13
Charnacé, Baron de, see Girard,
Hercule
Chartres, Bishop of, 279
Chavigny, de, 277
Chevreuse, Duchesse de, 147-51
Chillon, Marquis de, 21, 23
Cid, Le, 226, 264, 265
Cinq-Mars, Marquis de, 270-81
Colbert, 157, 255
Combalet, Madame de, 188, 193
Concini, 60-2, 79-85, 88-90, 94,
96, 104, 130, 240
Condé, 61, 62, 67, 83, 85, 86, 88,
92-6, 104, 130, 240
Corneille, 133
Courlay, M. du Pont de, 294 et seq.

D

De Concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii, see
Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis,
Duc de

INDEX

Deloche, Maxime, 208, 209
 Denbigh, Admiral, 170
 Dolé, State councillor, 85
 Dumas, 133
 Dupes, Day of, 189, 205, 209, 228, 275

E

Elizabeth of France, 85, 86
 Emmanuel, Charles, of Savoy, 141
 Epemon, Duc d', 122-4

F

Fayette, Mlle. de la, 273
 Ferdinand II, Emperor of Austria,
 138, 230, 236
 Flavigny, J. H. de, 42
 Fontevrault, monastic house of, 52
 Fontrailles, 276
 Force, Duc de la, 203, 205
 Fouquet, 173

G

Galigai, Leonara, 80-2, 84, 100, 112,
 120
Gazette de France, 201
 Girard, Hercule, Baron de Charnacé,
 231, 232
 Givry, Cardinal de, 30
 Gregory xv, Pope, 140
 Guéménée, Madame de, 206
 Guillot, Father Hardy, 18
 Guise, Duc de, 105, 196
 Guiton, Mayor of La Rochelle, 169

H

Halin-court, d', 26
 Hanotiaux, 47, 66
 Hauranne, Duvergier de, 51
 Hautefort, Mlle. de, 273
 Henri III, 13, 19, 22, 32
 Henri IV, 16, 19, 25, 26, 28, 31, 32,
 48, 55, 56, 58, 79, 133, 139, 149,
 181, 249
 Henrietta of France, 141, 154, 156,
 170
 Hugo, Victor, 133

I

Infreville, Louis le Roux d', 252
Instruction, The Christian's, see Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de
Instructions to Myself to bring me to Court, see Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de

J

Jannin, 86, 88
 Jansenism, 50
 Joseph, Father, 51, 52, 57, 119,
 120-3, 127-9, 136-7, 167, 173, 177,
 218, 232, 234, 241, 244, 245
 Jouvin, 35
 Joyeuse, Cardinal de, 26

L

Lepré-Balain, 136
 Longueville, 84
 Louis XIII, 85-6, 90-2, 97, 103, 109,
 111, 112, 114, 117, 120, 123, 125,
 126, 130, 134, 135, 144-8, 160-7,
 171, 173, 178, 179, 182-3, 188-95,
 198-207, 241-7, 270-5, 278, 281,
 283
 Luçon, Bishop of, see Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de
 Luynes, Duc de, 90-2, 97, 102, 111-3,
 115-9, 122-6, 129, 130

M

Maillé, Armand de, 287-301
 Malherbe, 132
 Mantua, Duke of, 177, 194
 Marconnay, Françoise de, 16
 Maretz, Jacques de, 253
 Marillac, Marshal de, 200, 202, 203,
 204, 229
 Marillac, Michel de, 190, 196, 199,
 200
 Masle, Michel de, 219
 Mayenne, 61, 84, 104
 Mazarini, Giulio, 189, 194, 195, 267,
 284

INDEX

- Medici, Marie de, 56-60, 65, 72, 74, 79-96, 100, 112, 114, 116-22, 125, 127, 132, 146, 147, 167, 174, 181, 182, 187-207, 228, 256, 275, 276, 277, 280, 281, 304
Memoirs, see Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de
Mercure François, 99, 171, 194, 201
 Mesmes, Claude de, Comte d' Avaux, 238
 Miron, Bishop of Angers, 71
 Monçon, Treaty of, 143
 Montigny, Marshal, 105
 Montmorency, Duc de, 184, 185, 202, 204-7, 229, 252
 Montpensier, Mlle. de, 150
 Morgues, Mathieu de, 129, 221, 262
 Mulet, Abbé, 218
 Mussolini, 134
- N
- Nantes, Bishop of, 279
 Nantes, Edict of, 180
 Navarre, Collège de, 19, 24, 27
 Navarre, Henry de, 14
 Nevers, Duc de, 61, 104, 177, 178, 180, 194
 Notables, Assembly of, 158
 Noyers, de, 277, 300, 301
- O
- Ogier, François, 223
 Olivares, Spanish Prime Minister, 155
Ordinances, see Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de
 Orléans, Gaston d', 147-50, 187, 198, 201, 204, 205, 206, 228, 244, 269, 270, 275, 278, 280
 Ornano, Marshal d', 147, 148, 150, 151
- P
- Pascal, 46
 Pasquier, Nicolas, 65
 Paul v, Pope, 28
 Perron, Cardinal du, 32
 Philip III, of Spain, 85
 Philip IV, 138
 Philippe, Auguste, 12
 Plessis, Antoine du, 12
 Plessis, Armand-Jean du, see Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de
 Plessis, François du, 13
 Plessis, Guillaume du, 12
 Plessis, Henri du, see Richelieu, Henri de
 Plessis, Jacques du, 17, 22
 Plessis, Louis du, 13
 Plessis, Nicole du, 287
 Pluvinel, Antoine de, 21, 23, 25, 42, 159
 Porte, Amador de la, 17, 18
 Porte, François de la, 14
 Porte, Suzanne de la, 14, 98
Principal Points of the Faith of the Catholic Church Defended against the Matters addressed to the King by the Four Ministers of Charenton, see Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de
 Pure, Michel de, 19
- R
- Racan, the poet, 169
 Rapin, 29
Register for year 1639 of Expenses of Household of Monseigneur the Cardinal, Duc de Richelieu, 208 et seq
Remonstrance de Caton Chrestien, 221
 Restitution, Decree of, 230
 Richelieu, Alphonse de, 22
 Richelieu, Armand-Jean du Plessis, Duc de—Correspondence, etc., 38, 57, 59, 61, 87, 88, 118, 137, 183, 185, 186, 192, 195, 202, 206, 247, 251, 260, 266, 267, 281. *Memoirs*, 73, 95, 106, 112, 113, 116, 174, 209. *Brief Instructions*, 42-6. *The Christian's Instruction*, 43. *Catechism of the Diocese of Luçon*, 43. *Instructions to Myself to bring me to Court*, 47. *Ordinances*, 43. *Principal Points of the Faith of the Catholic Church Defended against the Matters addressed to the King by the Four Ministers of Charenton*, 121. *Political Testament*, 136, 145, 259. *De Concordia Sacerdotii et Imperii*, 261. His Will, 285-306

INDEX

Richelieu, Henri de, 56, 59, 117
 Richelieu ('the monk'), 12
 Rochechouart, Françoise de, 13, 14
 Rocheposay, Chasteigner de la, 50, 52
 Rohan, Duc de, 178, 239
 Thou, de, 270, 271, 275, 278, 279, 281
 Toiras, Marquis de, 161, 165
 Torigny, 184, 185
 Tremblay, François le Clerc du, see
 Father Joseph
 Trent, Council of, 42
 Tromp, Admiral, 246

S

Sainte-Menehould, Treaty of, 62
 Saint-Simon, 14, 70
 Savoy, Duke of, 156, 180, 196
 Saxe-Weimar, Duke Bernard of, 238,
 242, 243, 246, 257
 Schomberg, 106, 107, 109, 167, 192,
 203, 205
 Séguier, 278
 Séguiran, Henri de, 253
 Sillery, 85, 88, 130, 287
 Smith, Richard, 24
 Soissons, Comte de, 150, 151, 269,
 270, 275
 Sourdis, Archbishop of Bordeaux, 54
 Spanish Alliance, 85
 Spinola, 167, 189
 Sully, 39, 56, 82
Summa, 32
Supplément à l'Histoire de France, 136

T

Talleyrand, Henri de, Marquis de
 Chalais, 148, 149, 150, 151
 Themines, Marshal de, 95

U

Urban VII, of Spain, 140
 Ursins, Marie Félicie des, 205

V

Valtellina, The, 137 et seq., 154, 178,
 229, 237, 242
 Vendôme, Duc de, 104, 148
 Vieuville, La, 130
 Vignerot, Armand de, 290-301
 Vignerot, François de, 290-9
 Vigny, Alfred de, 133, 271
 Villeroi, 86, 88
 Vitry, Baron de, 111
 Voltaire, 170

W

Wallenstein, 233, 235, 251

Y

Yver, François, 22, 25

